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	Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188

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1. REPORT DATE **2008**	2. REPORT TYPE	3. DATES COVERED **00-00-2008 to 00-00-2008**

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE **Future U.S. Security Relationships with Iraq and Afghanistan. U.S. Air Force Roles**	5a. CONTRACT NUMBER
	5b. GRANT NUMBER
	5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER
6. AUTHOR(S)	5d. PROJECT NUMBER
	5e. TASK NUMBER
	5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) **Rand Corporation,1776 Main Street,PO Box 2138,Santa Monica,CA,90407-2138**	8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)	10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)
	11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)

12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Approved for public release; distribution unlimited

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

14. ABSTRACT

15. SUBJECT TERMS

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT **Same as Report (SAR)**	18. NUMBER OF PAGES **183**	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT **unclassified**	b. ABSTRACT **unclassified**	c. THIS PAGE **unclassified**			

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-98)
Prescribed by ANSI Std Z39-18

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Future U.S. Security Relationships with Iraq and Afghanistan

U.S. Air Force Roles

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Preface

President Bush's *National Security Strategy* describes the current circumstance as one in which "America is at war," prompted by "the rise of terrorism fueled by an aggressive ideology of hatred and murder." The strategy highlights a parallel policy of "fighting and winning the war on terror and promoting freedom as the alternative to tyranny and despair."[1]

Iraq and Afghanistan are centerpieces of this strategy, giving the United States a huge stake in their long-term development. Not only is the United States heavily invested diplomatically, economically, and militarily in these two nations, but the countries are also situated in geostrategically critical locations. Iraq and Afghanistan are the nexus of many interrelated threats, including terrorism, insurgency, transnational crime, and trade in narcotics and weapons. Developments in these nations will affect the futures and regional ambitions of their neighbors, for good or for ill. A stable and secure Afghanistan and Iraq could be key partners with the United States and others in meeting the challenges they face in the Middle East and Central and South Asia—even as weak and ineffective governments and resulting instability in these two nations could once again create severe security concerns for the United States.

This monograph seeks to provide U.S. defense decisionmakers and planners with insights into the role that America's armed forces, especially its Air Force, might be called upon to play in forging durable

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[1] George W. Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, March 2006, Washington, D.C.: The White House, p. 1 of opening statement.

U.S.-Afghan and U.S.-Iraqi security relationships for the long term—both as direct providers of security to what will remain fragile and vulnerable states and as shapers of a regional environment within which Iraq and Afghanistan can thrive.

The research reported here was sponsored by the U.S. Air Force Director of Operational Plans and Joint Matters (A5X), Headquarters United States Air Force, and conducted within the Strategy and Doctrine Program of RAND Project AIR FORCE for a fiscal year 2006 study, "Future U.S. Security Relationships with Iraq and Afghanistan." It should be of interest to U.S. security policymakers, military planners, and analysts and observers of regional affairs in the Middle East and Central and South Asia.

The bulk of the research was completed in late 2006. To the extent practicable, the authors have updated major events and conditions described throughout the monograph through summer 2007. As any observer of Iraq and Afghanistan can attest, however, these developments are very fast paced and pose a challenge to analysis of long-term trends and factors. The authors fully expect some of the references in the document to appear dated to readers by the time of publication. Nevertheless, the findings and recommendations contained herein are designed to withstand the ebb and flow of near-term events and to remain relevant as a vision for the future.

RAND Project AIR FORCE

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Summary

Iraq and Afghanistan arguably present the most pressing foreign and defense policy concerns for the United States today. Years after the terror attacks of September 11, 2001, the United States continues to expend considerable diplomatic, economic, and military resources—not to mention the personal sacrifices of U.S. troops and civilians—on pursuing security and stability in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Much of the focus of the United States and its coalition partners understandably remains on near-term efforts to stabilize the two countries. However, even after more than six years of U.S. involvement in Afghanistan and more than four in Iraq, there is a lack of clarity within U.S. policy and planning circles and among the governments and peoples of the two countries and their neighbors about the United States' long-term intentions and objectives. Yet it is clear that lasting security and stability in Iraq and Afghanistan are critical to U.S. interests, which include promoting regional stability, ensuring access to resources, and defeating global terrorism. Advancing these interests in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the surrounding regions will require a long-term role for U.S. military forces, though one that probably falls short of the current military presence. Continued uncertainty about the types of long-term security relationships the United States intends to pursue—and the nature and degree of military presence they imply—can undermine these interests. Envisioning future security relationships in more concrete terms can (1) help communicate U.S. intentions; (2) build U.S. leverage, influence, and access; (3) guide current and future security

cooperation efforts; and (4) help plan future U.S. military activities in the Middle East and Central and South Asia.

Possible Future Security Relationships

Future roles for U.S. military forces in Iraq and Afghanistan will vary depending on a number of factors.

U.S., Iraqi, and Afghan National Security Objectives

All three governments currently share the vision of a future Iraq and Afghanistan that are stable, can manage their own internal security, and are cooperative in the region and with the West. However, the long-term political and security outcomes are uncertain. The United States must be prepared to deal with cooperative states, uncooperative states, and failed or failing states. Each outcome would involve very different threat perceptions and would demand different kinds of U.S. military involvement.

Threats to Iraqi, Afghan, and Regional Security

Even beyond the current security situation, there are several threats for which the United States and its security partners must be prepared. The most worrisome are the evolution of new forms of terrorism and insurgency and the breakdown of central authority and stability in Iraq and Afghanistan due to increased warlordism and sectarianism. Regional actors are further concerned about a spillover of jihadism and sectarian tensions from Iraq and Afghanistan into other countries. Iran also looms large as a threat to U.S. and allied interests in the regions, and its involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan is of increasing concern.

These threats intensify the need for long-term U.S. security relationships with Iraq and Afghanistan and participation in cooperative regional security arrangements. However, the United States must be careful to form security relationships that are both strong enough to address terrorism and insurgency and bolster partner governments' ability to promote stability and yet restrained enough to avoid inflaming local and regional sensitivities.

Prospects for U.S. Bilateral Security Ties with Kabul and Baghdad

The above analysis suggests that the United States should seek bilateral relationships that help Iraq and Afghanistan become more secure and cooperative with the West, establish credibility while taking local sensitivities into account, reassure regional actors by emphasizing transparency and balancing "hard" (e.g., combat) and "soft" (e.g., humanitarian) power in emerging Iraqi and Afghan military capabilities, and retain the flexibility to accommodate a variety of political outcomes in each country. U.S. bilateral relationships with Iraq and Afghanistan may range from formal defense pacts to strategic partnerships (which emphasize enduring cooperation on a wide range of interests), situational partnerships (which involve more-limited cooperation on specific issues), or minimal security ties.

Given the goals outlined above, an intensified strategic relationship with a cooperative Afghanistan—accompanied by a wide range of security cooperation activities—could serve U.S., Afghan, and regional interests well. A flexible situational partnership may be the most desirable long-term relationship with Baghdad, even in the best case of improving security and an Iraqi government outlook compatible with U.S. interests. A worsening of political outcomes in either Iraq or Afghanistan would call for the United States to scale back—but not necessarily to eliminate—certain security cooperation activities.

Future Roles of U.S., Iraqi, and Afghan Military Forces

The United States continues to employ its military forces in direct operations and in training, equipping, advising, and assisting (TEAA) activities to help bring about stable security environments and cooperative, moderate governments in Iraq and Afghanistan. The U.S. Air Force (USAF) plays a critical role in these efforts by helping build Iraqi and Afghan airpower and providing effective combat power and operational support to friendly forces. These and other USAF capabilities are likely to be in high demand in and around Afghanistan and Iraq for many years, even after substantial withdrawals of U.S. ground troops.

Recommendations for the U.S. Government and the Department of Defense

The United States must clarify its long-term intentions to the governments and peoples in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the surrounding regions. U.S. promises to stay "until the job is done"—and no longer—do not suffice; neither do "exit strategies" that fix a date of withdrawal but lack a context of future U.S. regional policy. The United States should communicate its vision by defining the types of multilateral cooperation it favors in the region and the bilateral relationships it desires with Iraq and Afghanistan. Below, we recommend specific steps the U.S. government (USG) and the Department of Defense (DoD) should take to clarify and develop their relationships in the regional and bilateral arenas. (See pp. 1–2, 126).

Regional Partnerships and Security Structures

The United States should cultivate a layered regional security framework that emphasizes bilateral and multilateral cooperation on common challenges. Over time, a cooperative framework should provide an attractive and more-stable alternative to the competitively oriented structures that traditionally have dominated the regions' security environments. The United States should help build upon concepts for regional cooperation on "soft" issues that local actors are already exploring. Moreover, it should continue to encourage regional dialogue about the futures of Iraq and Afghanistan, including how states can encourage positive outcomes in these two nations and how the states might cooperate to mitigate the consequences of less-favorable outcomes. (See pp. 61–62, 127–128).

   While the United States may not seek to engage Iran cooperatively in the near term on matters that transcend Iraq, the door must be left open to eventual Iranian participation in any cooperative regional security framework. In this context, for good or ill, Iran is a major player in the regions in which Iraq and Afghanistan are situated, and their bilateral relationships with Tehran will tend to be important shapers of events in both countries. U.S. actions that are seen as aimed at "containing"

or "freezing out" Iran are likely both to fail and to boomerang against U.S. interests in Iraq and Afghanistan. (See pp. 37–41, 127.)

U.S. Partnerships with Iraq and Afghanistan

The USG and DoD should take the following approach to developing long-term bilateral relationships with Iraq and Afghanistan:

- *Seek a more detailed, resourced strategic partnership with Kabul.* From Kabul's perspective, the existing U.S.-Afghan strategic partnership is vague about Washington's commitment to that nation. A stronger relationship should be defined with the Afghans that would be based on mutual interests and needs and that would reassure them that the United States has a long-term commitment to underwriting their country's security and self-determination. Importantly, the parties should emphasize that the strategic partnership (and continued U.S. military presence supporting the partnership) is dedicated to securing Afghanistan, integrating it with the region as a stabilizing force, and helping address areas of disagreement as well as common concerns between Kabul and its neighbors—not attacking neighboring countries. (See pp. 71–73, 128.)
- *Prepare to offer Baghdad a strong situational partnership.* Even if Baghdad is inclined to cooperate with the United States in the long term, local sensitivities may lead to a less visible and robust relationship similar to a situational partnership. Reassuring Iraqis that the United States does not intend to maintain a major military presence in Iraq over the long term and generally clarifying U.S. intentions could mitigate such sensitivities. To that end, U.S. use of Iraqi military facilities should be based on mutual agreement and a common understanding of the security situation. (See pp. 71–73, 128–129.)
- *Offer a wide range of security cooperation activities to governments in Kabul and Baghdad willing to work with the United States.* U.S. planners should link initiation and continuation of specific security cooperation activities and programs to be offered to Iraq and Afghanistan to institutional progress, government behavior, and

the security situation. This approach can provide incentives to the governments and militaries of the two nations to cooperate with the United States and develop along positive trajectories. It can also provide planners with sequenced "waypoints" that help them determine when activities should be expanded—or scaled back in the event Iraq or Afghanistan slide into less-favorable trajectories that lead to outcomes that are less compatible with U.S. interests. (See pp. 79–88, 129.)

Recommendations for the U.S. Air Force

Given the central role that the USAF now plays and will continue to play in Iraq and Afghanistan, we recommend the following approaches to building partner capacity, conducting direct operations, and planning for the future.

Building Iraqi and Afghan Capacity for Independent Air Operations

The capabilities of Iraqi and Afghan forces affect the demands that U.S. forces will face in the future. Just as U.S. ground forces might withdraw as indigenous ground forces gain the capacity to operate independently and effectively, so too might the USAF be able to reduce its commitments as the Iraqi Air Force (IqAF) and Afghan Air Corps (AAC) stand up. *The greater the emphasis on building indigenous air capabilities now, the faster operational demands on the USAF may diminish*. The DoD and the USAF should seek to apply a wide range of security cooperation tools to help the air arms develop institutionally and operationally. The USAF can leverage numerous programs, including International Military Education and Training (IMET), Foreign Military Financing (FMF), the Counterterrorism Fellowship Program (CTFP), and the Air National Guard State Partnership Program.

Specifically, the USAF should take the following steps to building Iraqi and Afghan air capacity:

- *Advocate for increased, sustained resources for higher-priority development of the IqAF and AAC.* Increasing the emphasis on

airpower development will require higher levels of resources. The decision to give high priority to development of Iraqi and Afghan airpower does not rest with the USAF; neither does the USAF control the bulk of the resources that could be applied. USAF leaders participating in DoD and interagency processes should take any opportunity to make the case for an infusion of additional resources into these endeavors. (See pp. 93–97, 130.)

- *In the near to medium term, focus on building Iraqi and Afghan air capabilities that enhance government legitimacy and support indigenous ground forces.* Internal security continues to be a primary focus of all Iraqi and Afghan security services, and the air arms are no exception. Existing statements of Iraqi and Afghan security strategy describe future militaries that independently protect each nation while serving as a stabilizing force for moderation in the respective regions. Over time, an Iraqi Air Force and an Afghan Air Corps can be built that are capable of supporting such priorities and serving as models of national unity in Iraq and Afghanistan. The USAF is helping build their operational capabilities and strengthen their institutions. Initially, planners should emphasize intratheater rotary- and fixed-wing transport and a reconnaissance capability—as they now seem to be doing in Iraq—to support counterinsurgency efforts (including infrastructure and border security) and to enhance central government presence in outlying areas. (See pp. 97–106, 130–131.)

- *Exercise caution in introducing Iraqi air attack capabilities.* These capabilities might be developed to support Iraqi ground units in counterinsurgency operations, and later to support the army in defense of Iraqi territory. The USAF must strike a balance between, on the one hand, the need to involve the IqAF in providing fire support to Iraqi forces, to maintain U.S. leverage, and to retain visibility into Iraqi force planning, and on the other hand, the desire to avoid association with sectarian strife and to discourage Iraqi acquisition of capabilities its neighbors might perceive as "offensive." The USAF therefore should encourage U.S.-Iraqi interoperability, a common targeting process, profes-

sionalism, and transparency in force planning and training. (See pp. 101–102, 131.)

- *In Afghanistan, help the AAC develop programs for education and basic airmanship.* At the same time, build reliable capabilities for airlifting government officials, Afghan National Army (ANA) troops, and humanitarian aid; evacuating casualties; and conducting rudimentary surveillance. These capabilities should be emphasized more in the near term because they are critical to establishing government credibility (especially in remote areas) and are less demanding in terms of training and equipping than other tasks like close air support and air intercept. (See pp. 102–105 131.)
- *Ensure adequate plans for the long-term sustainment of IqAF and AAC capabilities.* This task is equally as important as developing the capabilities themselves. The USAF can help Iraq and Afghanistan appropriately equip their new air arms and advise their planners against assembling a "hodge-podge" force that will be difficult to sustain over time. Moreover, the USAF should continue to support the air arms in developing organizations, leaders, aircrew, maintainers, base support capabilities, and a sustainable training pipeline. (See pp. 99, 104–105, 131–132.)
- *Develop security cooperation plans that hedge against less-favorable political and security contingencies in Iraq and Afghanistan.* The USAF is now conducting security cooperation activities that are largely applicable to states that are cooperative; however, because the political and security outcomes in Iraq and Afghanistan are uncertain, the USAF must ensure that it can adapt its TEAA activities in the event of less-favorable trajectories. This means identifying security cooperation activities or indigenous capabilities that the United States might need to limit in the event of changes in circumstances on the ground. This monograph provides guidelines to assist in this planning. (See pp. 79–88, 133.)

Direct Operations in Iraq and Afghanistan

USAF force elements will continue to conduct direct operations in Iraq and Afghanistan into the foreseeable future. These assets will likely be asked to accomplish numerous operational tasks involving intelligence,

surveillance, and reconnaissance; airlift; close air support; strikes on high-value targets; base support and force protection; and deterrence of external coercion and aggression. However, U.S. ground forces may begin withdrawing well before Iraqi and Afghan air arms are able to operate effectively and independently, leaving the USAF as the main provider of support to indigenous ground forces. To prepare for this role, we recommend that the Air Force take the following steps:

- *Assess the levels of U.S. ground forces needed to support U.S. air operations.* Requirements associated with coordinating operations with Iraqi and Afghan security forces and providing force protection to remaining U.S. assets may be high even after major drawdowns of U.S. ground combat forces. The USAF must work with the U.S. land components to ensure that it can continue to support U.S. interests in Iraq and Afghanistan even after major troop withdrawals. (See pp. 109–110, 112, 133.)
- *Eschew permanent basing in Iraq and Afghanistan and seek mutual agreement on access to in-country facilities.* Generally, the U.S. posture in Iraq and Afghanistan must reflect sensitivity and respect for local sovereignty. Yet the USAF will likely need access to one or two airbases in the near and medium terms in each country to enable responsive and persistent counterinsurgency operations at a reasonable cost in terms of operations tempo and resources. Moreover, as operations with Iraqi and Afghan forces become more commonplace, U.S. airmen will more frequently need to conduct planning, intelligence sharing, and tasking of missions with their Iraqi and Afghan air force and army counterparts at operational bases and in Baghdad and Kabul, not from a distance. The access issue should be negotiated with the governments in Kabul and Baghdad as coequals in the context of drawdowns of U.S. troops. (See pp. 115–116, 133.)
- *Develop contingency plans to prepare for the possibility of alternative outcomes in Iraq or Afghanistan.* The United States and its coalition partners are working hard to propel Iraq and Afghanistan toward security and stability. At the time of this writing, the most worrisome alternative is a failed- or failing-state outcome involving sec-

tarian violence (in Iraq) or warlordism (in Afghanistan). Such an outcome could require a high level of commitment from USAF assets. Airpower may be tasked extensively in such a scenario for peacekeeping or peace enforcement, providing humanitarian aid, protecting safe areas, and deterring outside intervention. In addition, the reemergence of authoritarian or dictatorial governments in either country could place varied demands on USAF assets across the regions. (See pp. 118–123, 133.)

- *Strongly advocate for a USAF seat at the theater "planning table" for operations and security cooperation, and assign the most experienced USAF planners to the theater.* Accomplishing tasks associated with direct operations and the development of indigenous forces requires a systematic approach to planning that involves all components of the theater command. To date, it is apparent from discussions with airmen that the USAF perspective has been relatively absent from joint planning. Improving this situation will require strong advocacy by the USAF leadership. Bringing airmen to the planning table will help ensure that airpower is employed effectively and that development of indigenous air arms receives a high priority. (See pp. 113–114, 134.)

Planning for a Long-Term Role

Given the wide range of important roles described in this monograph, the USAF will need to ensure that it is adequately prepared for a continued high tempo of operations in and around Iraq and Afghanistan. *The USAF should address the implications of ongoing high levels of demand now.* This includes preparing a rotation base to minimize problems associated with high personnel tempo and the emergence of low-density/high-demand (LD/HD) assets. It may involve shoring up manning in certain high-demand fields and expanding programs to increase the area and language skills of U.S. airmen in those career fields that involve training, advising, and operating with Iraqis and Afghans. (These programs would be useful as well over the long term for security cooperation activities in other areas of the Middle East and Central and South Asia.) The USAF should also begin exploring options to secure USAF modernization in the presence of endur-

ing operations and increasingly constrained budgets. As U.S. ground forces withdraw, there is a potential for a sort of "fatigue" to set in after billions of dollars have been spent on OIF and OEF. The USAF could be caught in the middle of this while having to meet other emerging demands in the region and elsewhere. Without adequate resources, USAF decisionmakers could find themselves mortgaging future capabilities to pay for expensive ongoing operations. On the other hand, preparing for and even embracing the Air Force's essential role in Iraq and Afghanistan will go far toward setting the appropriate context in which the USAF plans and programs its forces in the years to come. (See pp. 134–135.)

Acknowledgments

Miriam Polon, who edited the final document, and Steve Weprin, who shepherded it through the publications process.

Of course, the contents of this monograph are the sole responsibility of the authors.

Abbreviations

AAC	Afghan Air Corps
ACRS	Arms Control and Regional Security
ANA	Afghan National Army
ANP	Afghan National Police
aQAP	al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
C2	command and control
CAFTT	Coalition Air Force Transition Team
CAS	close air support
CASEVAC/ MEDEVAC	casualty evacuation/medical evacuation
CAWG	Comparative Aircraft Working Group
CBRN	chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear
CFC-A	Combined Forces Command in Afghanistan
COIN	counterinsurgency
CONOPS	concepts of operation
CSAF	Chief of Staff of the Air Force
CSAR	combat search and rescue
CT	counterterrorism
CTFP	Counterterrorism Fellowship Program

CTR	Cooperative Threat Reduction
DoD	Department of Defense
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of North Korea
EDA	excess defense articles
EU	European Union
EXBS	Export Control and Related Border Security
FARC	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia
FMF	foreign military financing
FMS	foreign military sales
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GTEP	Georgia Train and Equip Program
HUMINT	human intelligence
HVT	high-value target
ICI	Istanbul Cooperation Initiative
IED	improvised explosive device
IJO	Islamic Jihad Organization
IMET	International Military Education and Training
INEGMA	Institute for Near East and Gulf Military Analysis
IqAF	Iraqi Air Force
IRGC-QF	Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force
ISF	Iraqi Security Forces
ISR	intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance
LD/HD	low-density/high-demand
MANPADS	man-portable air defense system
MNSTC-I	Multinational Security Transition Command-Iraq
MOD	Ministry of Defense
MOI	Ministry of the Interior
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NWFP	North-West Frontier Province
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OFDA	Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
OPTEMPO	operations tempo
OSC-A	Office of Security Cooperation in Afghanistan
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense
PARP	Planning and Review Process
PERSTEMPO	personnel tempo
PIJ	Palestinian Islamic Jihad
PKK	Kurdistan Workers Party
PSYOPS	psychological operations
RDT&E	research, development, test and evaluation
SAAM	special assignment airlift mission
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SCG	Security Cooperation Guidance
SCIRI	Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SIIC	Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council
SOS	special operations squadron
SSOP	Security and Stability Operations Program
SSTRO	stability, security, transition, and reconstruction operations
TEAA	train, equip, advise, and assist
UN	United Nations
USAF	U.S. Air Force
USAFSOC	U.S. Air Force Special Operations Command

USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USCENTAF	U.S. Central Command Air Forces
USCENTCOM	U.S. Central Command
USG	U.S. government
WMD	weapons of mass destruction
WMDFZ	Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone
XCAS	"on-call" close air support

Introduction

Iraq and Afghanistan arguably present the most pressing foreign and defense policy concerns facing the United States today. Six years after the terror attacks of September 11, 2001 and the rapid demise of Taliban rule in Afghanistan that followed shortly afterward, the United States continues to expend considerable diplomatic, economic, and military resources—not to mention the personal sacrifices of U.S. troops and civilians—on pursuing security and stability in Iraq and Afghanistan. As part of Operations Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Enduring Freedom (OEF), some 160,000 U.S. troops were in Iraq and 26,000 troops were in Afghanistan as of summer 2007, fighting rising levels of violence while endeavoring to train and equip indigenous police and military forces to eventually take over the task of providing internal security. U.S. ground combat forces still patrol cities and towns and conduct major counterinsurgency (COIN) and counterterrorism (CT) operations in cooperation with coalition and Iraqi and Afghan government forces. The U.S. Air Force (USAF), along with airpower from other services and coalition partners, provides critical surveillance, transport, and fire support to U.S. and coalition ground forces and helps train, equip, advise, and assist Iraqi and Afghan security forces.

Much of the focus of the United States and its coalition partners understandably remains on near-term efforts to stabilize Iraq and Afghanistan. However, the uncertainty imposed by the day-to-day ebb and flow of violence and insecurity within Afghanistan and Iraq is compounded, both within those countries and throughout the neighboring regions, by uncertainty about the long-term intentions of the United

States. After some six years of U.S. involvement in Afghanistan and more than four years in Iraq, there remains a lack of clarity both within U.S. policy and planning circles and among the governments and peoples of Iraq and Afghanistan about the U.S. vision for the future. How long will the United States keep tens of thousands of troops deployed to try to build stable regimes in Baghdad and Kabul? What enduring roles does Washington seek for itself in Iraq and Afghanistan and, by extension, the Middle East and Central and South Asia? Assuming that Afghanistan and Iraq emerge from their travails as functioning, unified states, how do they fit into their respective regions? What if one or both fail in their transitions and fracture or descend into chaos? A lack of clear thinking and guidance on these and similar questions makes it difficult to build and sustain the regional support necessary not just to construct a stable, long-term security framework but also to bring peace and stability to Iraq and Afghanistan here and now.

Lasting security and stability in Iraq and Afghanistan are critical to U.S. interests, which include promoting stability and representative government, ensuring access to resources, and defeating global terrorism. Advancing these objectives and interests calls for a multi-layered approach that includes strong, though different, U.S. bilateral relations with Iraq and Afghanistan and multilateral relations between and among the surrounding regions. It also requires a focus on long-term strategic goals, planning for potential political developments, and engagement with security partners to leverage outcomes that would be favorable to U.S. interests. Envisioning future security relationships in more concrete terms can help communicate the intentions behind U.S. presence and resolve to Iraqi, Afghan, and regional governments and peoples. It can also build U.S. leverage, influence, and access; guide current and future security cooperation efforts; and inform plans for future U.S. military activities in the Middle East and Central and South Asia.

This monograph seeks to look beyond near-term concerns to explore potential longer-term security relationships with Kabul and Baghdad, emphasizing the role of the USAF, which we believe will have an enduring role there even after significant withdrawals of U.S. ground forces. The goal of this monograph, therefore, is *not* to pre-

scribe a strategy for reducing the sectarian and insurgent violence in Iraq and Afghanistan that now dominates the daily news but rather to frame possible long-term bilateral relationships under varying circumstances.

This introductory chapter outlines U.S., Iraqi, and Afghan national security objectives and posits alternative outcomes in Iraq and Afghanistan that would affect attainment or formulation of these objectives and therefore drive uncertainty in the analysis of long-term issues in these two nations.

Chapter Two assesses threats to Iraqi, Afghan, and regional security from the perspectives of Washington, Kabul, and Baghdad, as well as other regional actors. These perceptions provide an important context for understanding the political motivations and sensitivities that will shape security relationships and the conditions that necessitate the development of strong security capabilities in each country.

Given this analysis of objectives, political outcomes, and threat perceptions, Chapter Three explores alternative security relationships the United States might forge with Iraq and Afghanistan, first in the context of potential regional security arrangements and then at the bilateral level with each country. The chapter also details the types of security cooperation activities the U.S. government (USG) could pursue to support these relationships.

Based on these potential relationships, Chapter Four analyzes future roles for U.S., Iraqi, and Afghan military forces, paying particular attention to the operational tasks the air forces should accomplish over time and the demands the USAF likely will face in the future. The USAF performs critical tasks in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the surrounding regions related to both direct operations and building partner capacity. As we explore in Chapter Four, the USAF's extensive presence in the area is likely to continue for some time. Thus, as we attempt to infuse U.S. security relationships with a long-term perspective, we also define the USAF's role in fostering those relationships.

Finally, Chapter Five recommends steps that the USG, Department of Defense (DoD), and USAF can take to advance long-term U.S. security objectives in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the surrounding regions.

U.S., Iraqi, and Afghan Security Objectives

What are the long-term security objectives for Iraq, Afghanistan, and the surrounding regions? We first examine these objectives from the U.S. point of view and then consider the Iraqi and Afghan perspectives.

U.S. Interests in the Surrounding Regions

The United States has enduring interests and objectives in the Middle East, Central Asia, and South Asia—the regions stretching from Egypt and Turkey to the west, to India, Pakistan, and Kazakhstan in the east and north, and including the Arabian Peninsula and Iran (see Figure 1.1). Survival of friendly regimes, unfettered access to energy resources, and a stable balance of power have been staples of U.S. strategy in these regions for decades. Access to the regions' oil and natural gas is a vital U.S. interest and is critical to the health of the global economy. Efforts to combat terrorist groups (especially al-Qaeda) and insurgent movements threatening U.S. interests are a central component of U.S. regional strategy. The United States seeks to safeguard the security of its long-standing ally Israel, and also maintains security ties with Pakistan, Turkey, India, and such Arab security partners as Egypt, Jordan, and the Gulf monarchies. It tries to balance its interest in promoting human rights and the democratization of autocratic states with the need for continued stability, a balance that presents a long-term challenge. The United States works to reduce regional tensions—particularly the Indo-Pakistani and Israeli-Palestinian conflicts—that have the potential to threaten important U.S. interests. Finally, the United States seeks to counter criminal enterprises that thrive in the regions and interact with insurgent and terrorist groups in mutually supportive ways.

U.S. Interests in Iraq and Afghanistan

Situated in geostrategically critical locations, Iraq and Afghanistan are the nexus of many interrelated threats, including terrorism, insurgency, transnational crime, and trade in narcotics and weapons. Thus, they loom large in U.S. national security strategy. The United States has a significant stake in these countries' long-term development, and it is

Figure 1.1
The Middle East and Central and South Asia

heavily invested diplomatically, economically, and militarily in the two nations.

The United States and Afghanistan forged a "strategic partnership" in May 2005, committing themselves to "an Afghanistan that is democratic, free, and able to provide for its own security" and that "will never again be a safe haven for terrorists."[1] The goal of the partnership is to "help ensure Afghanistan's long-term security, democracy, and prosperity" under "a government based on democratic principles, respect for human rights, and a market economy."[2] In terms of Afghan-

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[1]   U.S. Department of State, Office of the Press Secretary, "Joint Declaration of the United States-Afghanistan Strategic Partnership," White House Press Release, May 23, 2005.

[2]   U.S. Department of State (2005).

istan's position in the region, the partnership seeks to "support Afghanistan's initiative to restore the country's historic role as a land bridge connecting Central and South Asia and to shift the pattern of regional relations from rivalry to economic and political cooperation."[3] Among the security objectives the partnership underwrites are organizing, training, equipping, and sustaining Afghan security forces and reforming the security sector; consulting in the event of threats to Afghanistan's territorial integrity and independence; conducting counterterrorist operations; and supporting counternarcotics programs.

The November 2005 *National Strategy for Victory in Iraq* describes as a vital U.S. interest "a new Iraq with a constitutional, representative government that respects civil rights and has security forces sufficient to maintain domestic order and keep Iraq from becoming a safe haven for terrorists."[4] The strategy defines and categorizes victory in terms of chronological stages:

> **Short term.** Iraq is making steady progress in fighting terrorists, meeting political milestones, building democratic institutions, and standing up security forces.
>
> **Medium term.** Iraq is in the lead defeating terrorists and providing its own security, with a fully constitutional government in place, and on its way to achieving its economic potential.
>
> **Longer term.** Iraq is peaceful, united, stable, and secure, well integrated into the international community, and a full partner in the global war on terrorism.[5]

In addition to political and economic tracks, the strategy identifies a security track whose object is "to develop the Iraqis' capacity to secure their country while carrying out a campaign to defeat the terrorists and neutralize the insurgency."[6]

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[3]   U.S. Department of State (2005).

[4]   National Security Council, *National Strategy for Victory in Iraq* (November 2005), pp. 7–8.

[5]   National Security Council (2005), p. 1.

[6]   National Security Council (2005), p. 8.

More-recent U.S. statements of strategy in Iraq have tempered the ambitious goals laid out in the *Strategy for Victory*. In early December 2006, the bipartisan Iraq Study Group issued 79 recommendations on Iraq. A month later, in January 2007, President Bush offered his "New Way Forward in Iraq" and announced a "surge" of some 21,500 troops to support the strategy. This document emphasized six fundamental elements: "Let the Iraqis lead; help Iraqis protect the population; isolate extremists; create space for political progress; diversify political and economic efforts; and situate the strategy in a regional approach."[7] In late spring 2007, there were reports that the top U.S. commander and U.S. ambassador in Iraq were developing a new Joint Campaign Plan that allegedly called for "localized security" and political accommodation in the "near term," with sustainable security and greater reconciliation on a nationwide basis in the "intermediate term," which was identified as Summer 2009. The plan also allegedly emphasized establishing the rule of law and removing sectarian elements from Iraqi institutions.[8]

In sum, U.S. interests in both Afghanistan and Iraq lie in fostering moderate, representative governments that respect human rights and the rule of law; enabling them to manage their own internal security effectively and create environments inhospitable to terrorist groups; helping them prosper under growing market economies; and encouraging them to serve cooperative regional aims. The United States seeks to develop the two nations as partners in countering terrorism, stemming the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and regional stability. It also seeks to deter meddling or outright intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan by neighboring states.

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[7] National Security Council, "Fact Sheet: The New Way Forward in Iraq," The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, January 10, 2007.

[8] The Joint Campaign Plan reportedly is classified. See Michael R. Gordon, "U.S. Seen in Iraq Until at Least '09," *New York Times*, July 24, 2007, p. A1; and Ann Scott Tyson, "New Strategy for War Stresses Iraqi Politics: U.S. Aims to Oust Sectarians from Key Roles," *Washington Post*, May 23, 2007, p. A1.

Iraqi and Afghan Security Objectives

As with most nations, the national security objectives of Iraq and Afghanistan are based in part on systemic characteristics that remain relatively constant—their traditional positions in the international system and their political geography. These factors make the two nations very different from one another. In terms of position, a unified Iraq may be classified as a "middle" power, unable to control its environment but still able to pursue its own interests and to seek autonomy of action.[9] Its oil resources are one major reason it has been able to sustain this position. Unlike Iraq, resource-poor Afghanistan is a "lesser" power, unable to control its environment or to pursue its interests with much autonomy. Historically, Afghanistan has succumbed to the influence of, and interference by, neighboring states (Pakistan and Iran) and larger powers nearby (Russia in particular). With regard to political geography, Iraq is largely landlocked save for a small coastline along the Shatt al-Arab and the Persian Gulf. Much of its trade with the world, especially its oil exports, flows across this coastline. Afghanistan is completely landlocked and must conduct its trade with the world by air or through its neighbors. It serves traditionally as a bridge between South and Central Asia, both politically and economically.

Thus, any central government in Kabul or Baghdad would embrace certain objectives—such as maintaining territorial sovereignty and ensuring access to external markets—that arise from these "facts of life" of international position and political geography.

However, particular regimes may base some objectives, as well as their strategy for attaining those objectives, on the more-contingent factors of political culture and government outlook, both of which can change dramatically over time. The ouster of the Taliban in Afghanistan and Saddam Hussein in Iraq naturally have had a huge impact on these nations' security strategies. The strategies could change further

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[9]   The authors wish to thank RAND colleague Andrew Rathmell for his ideas on the systemic and contingent factors that will help determine Iraq's foreign policy and external relationships in the future. See also Anoushiravan Ehteshami and Raymond A. Hinnebusch, *Syria And Iran: Middle Powers in a Penetrated Regional System*, London and New York: Routledge, 1997.

in the future depending upon the political requirements that dominate the Afghan and Iraqi polities over the longer term.

The stated interests and objectives of the governments in Kabul and Baghdad are currently relatively consistent with U.S. interests. They describe a future Iraq and Afghanistan that are developing democratically, can independently manage internal security, and are cooperative both regionally and with the West. Afghan government statements of national security interests and objectives appear in several official documents, one of which is the Afghanistan National Development Strategy, published in February 2006.[10] A relatively complete statement of defense-related interests listed in Afghanistan's National Military Strategy includes "continuous improvement, consolidation, and development of the central government; reconstruction, development, and activation of all political, security, social, and administrative organizations; imposing large-scale reduction on narcotics cultivation and trafficking; defeating local and regional Al-Qaeda and other insurgent and terrorist groups, independently and jointly with the cooperation of Coalition Forces; collecting illegal weapons and munitions from individuals throughout the country; ensuring security of Afghanistan's border areas and air space; and establishing and developing good international relationships based on mutual respect, noninterference in the internal affairs of other countries, and enhancing Afghanistan's active position as a positive and effective member of the United Nations."[11]

Iraq's first constitutional government was formed in mid-2006, and it published its first national security strategy in summer 2007.[12] The strategy describes a range of political, national security, economic, and social interests; threats to those interests; and the strategic means by which Iraq's government intends to pursue them. Stated Iraqi interests appear to be broadly consistent with those of the United States.

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[10] See Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, *Afghanistan National Development Strategy*, February 1, 2006.

[11] Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Ministry of Defense, *The National Military Strategy*, October 26, 2005, p. 2.

[12] Government of Iraq, *Iraq First: Iraqi National Security Strategy 2007–2010*, Baghdad, July 2007.

Iraqi interests include strengthening national sovereignty, protecting civil rights and freedoms, forging harmonious regional and international relationships, and establishing the rule of law.[13] However, there is no guarantee that Iraqi and U.S. objectives will continue to coincide for long. There are signs that current Iraqi leaders are promoting a sectarian agenda that diverges both from the Iraqi objectives outlined in their strategy statements and from U.S. objectives. This will present severe challenges to U.S. Iraq policy as political and security trends play out.

In Iraq, major domestic groups and parties have interests and objectives at odds with those stated by the central government. Some of these groups dominate government ministries, man the security services (police, military, and intelligence), and participate in the parliament. After generations of Sunni domination, the majority Shi'a have become ascendant in Iraq and, along with the Kurds, now control the pace and the depth of reconciliation efforts. Some Shi'a groups have used the security services to conduct sectarian violence and ethnic cleansing in Baghdad and elsewhere that is incompatible with stated U.S. and Iraqi government objectives. Similarly, the Kurds have moved, through property seizures and displacement of Arab residents, to strengthen their position in Kirkuk, a key multiethnic city that many Kurds would like to see incorporated into Iraqi Kurdistan. All this suggests that the government of Iraq in many senses is not a unitary or fully competent entity, and the United States must account for this in its bilateral security relationship. The government in Kabul, likewise, does not control much of Afghanistan outside the capital, nor does it have a monopoly on the use of force.

Alternative Outcomes in Iraq and Afghanistan

While U.S., Iraqi, and Afghan interests and objectives coincide to varying degrees at present, significant uncertainty exists about the political and security outcomes there. For long-term planning purposes, there-

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[13] Government of the Republic of Iraq (2007).

fore, it is necessary to frame alternative outcomes that could affect the future demands on U.S. forces and thus the capabilities the USAF might need to provide. Although our preference is not to plan for failure, our analysis would be incomplete without considering the implications of alternative political and security outcomes in Iraq and Afghanistan that may be harmful to U.S. interests. Nor is it our intention to predict the future or to be exhaustive, but rather to prepare the U.S. government and its armed forces for a range of plausible contingencies.

Figure 1.2 shows a domain of potential political and security conditions for our treatment of outcomes in Iraq and Afghanistan. The domain contains four quadrants based on the compatibility of government policies and outlook with U.S. interests, on the one hand, and the ability of a government to independently ensure its own security and stability on the other. The more one moves from left to

Figure 1.2
Alternative Political and Security Outcomes in Iraq and Afghanistan
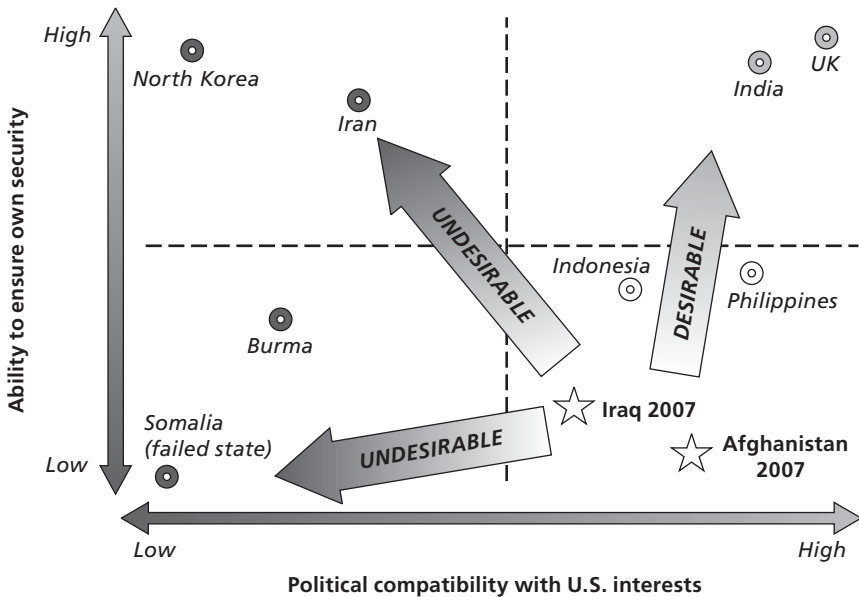
NOTE: Arrows show the directions in which Iraq and Afghanistan could move.
RAND *MG681-1.2*

right along the "compatibility spectrum," the greater the congruence between the state's interests and objectives and those of the United States. For example, a unified Iraq or Afghanistan that is generally pro-Western and seeks to strengthen its democratic institutions, build a market economy, combat terrorist and criminal groups within its borders, maintain independence from Iran, and work toward regional stability could be considered highly compatible with U.S. interests. The more one moves from bottom to top along the "security spectrum," the higher the capability of the state to ensure its own internal stability and defend itself against external threats and the less it might be in need of foreign support for these purposes. States like the United Kingdom (UK), Canada, Australia, and India would populate the upper-right "compatible-secure" quadrant. Alternatively, one might assign Indonesia, the Philippines, and Colombia to the lower-right "compatible-insecure" quadrant because of their need for external support against such destabilizing internal influences as Abu Sayyaf in the Philippines and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) in Colombia. Iran, Syria, and the Democratic Republic of North Korea (DPRK) all have highly adversarial relationships with the United States but relatively strong central governments, and thus would occupy the upper-left "incompatible-secure" quadrant. The lower-left quadrant would contain relatively "incompatible-insecure" states, such as Burma, Sudan, and—at the low end of both spectrums—Somalia, a failed state.

The placement of actual states in this domain is an art, not a science. The domain is more a tool for discussing scenario space and vectors than a vehicle for evaluating the policies of nations and their ability to govern. Some states may remain in the same quadrant for many years (the Soviet Union was in the incompatible-secure quadrant for over four decades), but may move from one to another in relatively short periods of time (Iran, for example, bolted quickly from right to left on the compatibility spectrum as a result of the Islamic Revolution in 1979). In some cases, states may consist of nonunitary actors that occupy multiple quadrants at once. Examples of such states are Lebanon and Pakistan, where the activities of Hizballah in the former and elements of the intelligence services in the latter contradict official policy and undermine stability, despite being parts of their governments.

Iraq and Afghanistan certainly occupied the lower end of the security spectrum in mid-2007. And, arguably, their policies do not situate them at the highest end (to the right) of the compatibility spectrum. Kabul seems to lack adequate will to tackle endemic government corruption, while Baghdad has been slow to deal with both corruption and militias in government ministries and has made some worrisome overtures to Iran. Thus, as a starting point, we place Iraq and Afghanistan in the compatible-insecure quadrant, with the former somewhat further to the left than the latter. Again, this is an arguable starting point, but it helps us visualize potential political and security trajectories.

Iraq and Afghanistan could remain in the "compatible-insecure" quadrant for the foreseeable future if their central governments remain weak and continue to need and desire a large U.S. military presence to counter insurgent and terrorist activities and other threats to internal stability.

Toward Compatibility and Security

The development of Iraq and Afghanistan as cooperative, secure, unified states would represent a desirable trajectory and a success for U.S. endeavors in OIF and OEF and for currently stated Iraqi and Afghan government aims. In this case, Kabul and Baghdad might welcome U.S. and other Western support and generally could pursue security goals consistent with Western interests in the region.[14] Iraq and Afghanistan likely would seek independence from Iranian influence and, in the event of aggressiveness by the Islamic Republic, might even support potential efforts to contain it. They would provide inhospitable ground for terrorist groups within their borders. This would not necessarily signify a complete eradication of such organizations or the total absence of terrorist acts—only that each government would be

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[14] One reviewer noted that the current appearance or rhetoric of strategic compatibility with Iraq and Afghanistan may have more to do with the ongoing U.S. occupation rather than with how the political leaderships of those countries actually see the future. While we are cognizant of the pressures that the presence of thousands of foreign troops may have on a nation's leadership, we assume here that compatibility involves an actual confluence of interests.

a willing and ever more capable partner in counterterrorism efforts. The governments would increasingly manage political and military efforts independently to stamp out remaining insurgent groups, which they would try to marginalize through political co-option, military or police action, and economic incentives. Still, violence may continue to be a part of the internal landscape. To a large extent, however, most external support of government counterinsurgency efforts would be invisible to the average Iraqi or Afghan. Finally, a compatible-secure Iraq and Afghanistan would seek accommodation with neighbors to promote regional stability and would support efforts to build cooperative regional security structures.

Toward Incompatibility and Insecurity
Were Iraq or Afghanistan to tend toward the incompatible-insecure quadrant, government policies might be amenable to U.S. and Western interests on specific issues. But competing pressures from powerful domestic groups (e.g., ethnic or religious groups, clans, warlords) could drive a weak central government to cooperate with many actors—including potential adversaries of the United States, such as Iran—and make it prone to changing policies relatively quickly. We refer to such a state as *multivectoral*—one that occupies the middle to left of the compatibility spectrum. Outside powers might compete for opportunities to work with the host country and possibly would influence the domestic and foreign policy decisions of its government. From the U.S. perspective, a multi-vectoral state could be an unreliable security partner in the long run. It may face continued internal security problems from a nexus of terrorist, insurgent, and criminal groups—and thereby would be a potential source of instability in the region. It would have little choice but to cooperate with its neighbors and in regional and international organizations, but its actual contribution to mutual and collective security efforts would be circumscribed.

In the deepest region of the incompatible-insecure quadrant (near the extreme lower left)—and, in fact, anywhere along the very bottom of the chart denoting extreme insecurity—civil war, sectarian violence, warlordism, and high levels of criminal activity (e.g., narcotics trafficking) would characterize a failing or failed Iraq or Afghanistan. The

central government would be either very weak or nonexistent.[15] Were a central government to exist, its attitude toward the United States, Iran, or any other country would be less important than its incapacity. It is possible that the attitudes of individual warring factions (e.g., the Kurds in Iraq or a warlord in Afghanistan) would play a more important role in how U.S. policymakers would deal with the situation. The lack of authority in many regions of the country would provide an environment conducive to terrorist groups for recruiting and training personnel and establishing bases of operation. Other regional states could provide financial and material support to individuals or groups within the failed state, and the potential for overt military intervention by those states would be high.

Toward Incompatibility and Security

While not necessarily immune to U.S. efforts to make them more cooperative, strong and possibly authoritarian governments in Kabul or Baghdad that largely choose to oppose U.S. and Western interests might become objects of U.S. foreign and security policy planning rather than partners in it. An Afghan example of this outcome would be a resurgent Taliban government, while in Iraq one could imagine the return of dictatorship, or a "Saddam redux." Such governments (possibly even one run by a Shi'a strongman in Baghdad) could be less likely to have cordial relations with Iran and might threaten other countries in the region. The central government might seek to counter terrorism on the part of groups that threaten its control or existence (here, there might be areas of agreement with the United States), but it might also support certain terrorist groups whose interests coincide with those of the uncooperative state or that are prone to its influence. There might continue to be some level of insurgent activity against the government; in fact, one could imagine the United States supporting an insurgency against that government. The state could formulate rela-

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[15] Some would argue that Iraq is already heading toward this outcome. Our purpose here is not to characterize the current situation but to prepare the U.S. military to deal with potential situations in the future. Still, our analysis of long-term strategies may be applicable to exigencies in the nearer term.

tively assertive foreign and security policies against U.S. friends and allies in its neighborhood and, in extreme cases, could pose a threat of covert adventurism or overt aggression. On the other hand, while we generally assume here that this state is incompatible with U.S. interests, in some scenarios the United States could find common cause with such a government against regional threats to each nation's core interests and therefore could provide some support. This would depend on the nature of the dictatorship and the priorities accorded to different objectives in U.S. national and regional security strategies.

In Iraq's case, partition or confederalism could potentially encompass any combination of these outcomes, depending on the outlook of a given autonomous Iraqi region or province. For example, it is possible to conceive of a compatible-secure Iraqi Kurdistan, a multi-vectoral or incompatible-secure Shi'a region, and an incompatible-insecure or failing Sunni region. The United States would need to formulate foreign and security policies that deal with all three regions and, in a confederalist case, possibly a central government.

We believe that purposeful partition of Afghanistan is extremely unlikely and therefore do not consider it.[16]

Concluding Remarks

Political and security outcomes in Iraq and Afghanistan will have a profound effect on threat perceptions both within each country and in the United States and the rest of the regions surrounding those countries. They will also affect the demand for, and nature of, U.S. military relationships with the two countries and their neighbors. U.S. involvement should be aimed at encouraging each country to enhance its security and deepen its compatibility with U.S. interests while preparing for the possibility of other outcomes.

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[16] Ethnic groups in Afghanistan are distributed unevenly throughout the country, so partition of any sort would likely require major ethnic cleansing. There is little sign of this occurring or, if it occurred, succeeding.

The remaining chapters of this monograph discuss the factors and considerations that will bear most strongly on future security relationships and associated security cooperation activities.

Perspectives on Potential Threats to Stability and Security in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Surrounding Regions

Introduction

As discussed in Chapter One, the United States has a strong interest in the long-term security of Iraq, Afghanistan, and the surrounding regions. Even beyond the current security situation in each country, there are several potential threats for which the United States and its security partners must be prepared. But the perceptions of these threats may vary widely depending on where one stands based on ethnic, political, religious, ideological, and national grounds. This chapter examines these threat perceptions. First, it explores the perceptions of key domestic groups in Iraq and Afghanistan, then it discusses two broad threats to future Afghan and Iraqi stability: (1) the evolution of new forms of terrorism and insurgency and (2) a breakdown in central authority driven by sectarianism, political struggles for power, and warlordism. Next, the chapter reviews regional perceptions of current and potential developments in Iraq and Afghanistan, focusing on the Arab Gulf states, Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan. The chapter concludes with a treatment of the effects of alternative political and security outcomes in Iraq and Afghanistan on those threat perceptions.

Threats to Iraqi and Afghan Security

Any discussion of threats to Iraqi and Afghan security must take into account the perceptions of major domestic groups in each country. As long as the central authorities in Kabul and Baghdad remain relatively weak and prone to considerable pressure from these groups (both from inside and outside the government), Iraq and Afghanistan will look less like unitary actors and more like agglomerations of interests competing either for control of each state or for local power and resources in the absence of state authority. Thus, as we discuss threats in this chapter, we highlight areas where the perceptions of key internal groups might come into conflict with one another and with stated goals of the central governments. Because the futures of these states are uncertain, the United States must be prepared to deal with those groups, whether at the state or substate levels.

Threat Perceptions of Iraq's Domestic Groups

Iraq's three major domestic groups—the Shi'a, the Kurds, and the Sunni Arabs—have varied threat perceptions based on ethnic and religious factors as well as historical experience.[1] Having lost their dominant position in Iraq with the demise of the Ba'athist regime, the Sunni Arabs are apprehensive about their role as a minority in a new Iraq, and they harbor a deep distrust of the other groups and their supporters, as well as the United States. They perceive a breakup of Iraq and the emergence of a Shi'a-dominated government heavily influenced by Iran as the most severe threat to their community. Given their relative lack of physical access to Iraq's oil resources, Sunni Arabs fear that state disintegration or the ascendancy of an anti-Sunni government would deprive them of the revenues they deserve from the exploitation and

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[1] It is important to note that these individual groups are far from monolithic. They are marked by a complex diversity of social classes and ideological orientations—conservative to moderate Islam, nationalism, middle and working classes, and clerical classes. Subgroups often compete with one another, sometimes violently. As of mid-2007, intra-Shi'a conflict between Muqtada al-Sadr, the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council, and other groups was becoming more frequent and severe, particularly in the southern city of Basra. Moreover, Iraq's Sunni communities are beginning to take up arms against al-Qaeda in Iraq and other Sunni jihadist groups in their midst.

export of these resources. They perceive Iran as a dire threat to Iraq's unity and well-being, believing Iran's interests lie in extending Shi'a dominance in the region.

Iraq's Shi'a certainly hold a different view of Iran. Having harbored and supported many of their Iraqi Shi'a coreligionists under Saddam Hussein, the Iranians continue to provide support in various forms to the Shi'a community and the Shi'a-dominated government. Still, there is a potential for the Iraqi Shi'a in the future to view Iran's efforts to exert influence as overbearing and threatening to their independence.[2] Conversely, the Shi'a view the Sunni Arab insurgency as a grave threat to their newfound power at the national level and their well-being at the community level. It is likely that Saudi Arabia and other Sunni Arab governments would be perceived as even more threatening to the Iraqi Shi'a if those governments began providing heavy, overt support to the Sunni Arab insurgency, especially military aid. In that case, the Iraqi Shi'a might also find common cause with Shi'a communities in those Sunni-led countries, especially if their governments took repressive measures against their Shi'a citizens.

The Kurds in northern Iraq are especially concerned about perceived threats to their autonomy. Foremost among these is the military threat from Turkey, to the north, and potentially from Iran. But from the Kurdish perspective, development of a strong central government in Baghdad could also endanger this autonomy. Moreover, the Kurds harbor some animosity toward Iraqi Arabs and Turkmen who have populated what they consider to be traditionally Kurdish areas, especially the city of Kirkuk.

Threat Perceptions of Afghanistan's Domestic Groups

The ethnic and religious fault lines in Afghanistan are not nearly as pronounced as they are in Iraq. However, cleavages apparent during the 1990s under Taliban rule could resurface if the Taliban gained

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[2]   Some major Iraqi Shi'a groups have already distanced themselves from the Islamic Republic. Al-Sadr, while at times pursuing tactical ties of convenience with Iran, pursues a strongly nationalist agenda. The Supreme Council of Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), one of Iran's closest allies in Iraq, has changed its name to the Supreme Iraqi Islamic Council (SIIC) to shed the image of extending Iran's Islamic revolution.

substantial ground and the support of Afghan Pashtuns at the expense of the central government in Kabul. The Shi'a Hazaras in the west and ethnic Tajiks in the north—the latter having dominated the Northern Alliance against Taliban rule in the 1990s—have largely acquiesced to government and international efforts to disarm and demobilize illegal armed groups in the country.[3] However, if these communities perceived a major Taliban resurgence in Afghanistan that threatened the government in Kabul, they would be likely again to take up arms, probably with the support of Iran, Russia, and India.

These ethnic and religious issues contribute to the evolution of terrorism and insurgency and threaten to weaken the authority of central governments in Baghdad and Kabul. They are a major cause of concern for long-term security in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the surrounding region.

The Evolution of Terrorism and Insurgency in Afghanistan and Iraq

Insurgent groups and terrorist organizations are among the greatest threats to security in Iraq and Afghanistan. Broadly speaking, future terrorist and insurgent groups based in each country fall into three categories: those with the immediate goal of overthrowing the existing political order and/or ejecting foreign troops; those with broader ambitions of expanding their fight to neighboring states; and those that seek to attack the continental United States. In many cases, groups may embrace local, regional, and global agendas simultaneously but assign priority to one or another.[4] In addition, as evidenced by the deliberations of al-Qaeda–affiliated groups in Saudi Arabia from 2003

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[3]   The Pashtuns make up 40 percent of Afghanistan's population, the Tajiks 20 percent, and the Hazaras 20 percent. Pashtuns are mostly Sunni Muslim and speak Pashto. The Tajiks are mostly Sunni while the Hazaras are Shi'a; both speak Dari, a Persian dialect. See Marvin G. Weinbaum, "Afghanistan and Its Neighborhood: An Ever Dangerous Neighborhood," United States Institute of Peace, Special Report 162, June 2006.

[4]   The most immediate and potent example is Hizballah, which initially formed as a localized Shi'a defense force during the Lebanese Civil War but espoused a Khomeinist view of global Islamic revolution. It assumed the mantle of resisting the Israeli occupation during the 1990s, and developed an extraterritorial terrorist capability to strike U.S. and Israeli interests worldwide. Over time, however, its political orientation has remained largely centered on Lebanon.

to 2004, the question of prioritization between the "far" and "near" enemy is often a trigger for intense debate and dissension within the rank-and-file and the senior leadership of terrorist groups.[5] How the United States manages its future relations with Afghanistan and Iraq and major groups therein could exert tremendous influence over the resolution of this internal debate, as well as the broader organizational mutation of future terrorist entities.

The evolution of the Sunni Arab insurgency in Iraq and the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan could depend largely on the ability and willingness of the central governments to reduce the popular support these insurgents enjoy in their areas of operation—for example, through political accommodation and economic opportunity. As noted above, the Sunni Arab community in Iraq feels disenfranchised by the sudden Shi'a political ascendancy after generations of Sunni-based minority rule dating back to the Ottoman Empire. Thus, some Sunnis continue to support insurgent activities as a means either to regain control of the state and expel foreign forces or to ensure a prominent role in decisionmaking and what it considers a fair share of Iraq's oil revenues. In addition, despite the dominance of Shi'a interests in government, one could imagine the development of Shi'a-based insurgent groups violently opposed to any political compromise with other religious and ethnic communities, relations with the United States at the expense of Iran, or official unwillingness to apply extreme interpretations of shari'a (Islamic law). Splinter groups of Muqtada al-Sadr's paramilitary organization, the Jaysh al-Mahdi (Army of the Mahdi), already are appearing that oppose his participation in Iraqi politics and parliament and seek to foster civil war.[6]

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[5] Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (aQAP) witnessed significant dissent and debate within its ranks about whether to take its fight to Iraq. For an example of how this dilemma was managed by the group's leading ideologues, see the articles by Muhammad bin Ahmed al-Salam in aQAP's magazine *Sawt al-Jihad* (The Voice of Jihad), Issue 11.

[6] See, for example, Sudarsan Raghavan, "Militias Splintering into Radicalized Cells; New Groups Appear More Ruthless In Use of Bombings and Death Squads," *Washington Post*, October 19, 2006, p. A1. Shi'a militiamen associated with Muqtada al-Sadr should not be placed in the same category as Sunni jihadi terrorists. Although al-Sadr's militiamen share the jihadists' hostility toward the United States and have certainly engaged in violent activi-

Aside from strategic and organizational mutations, terrorist and insurgent groups in Afghanistan and Iraq will continue to devise innovative and increasingly asymmetric tactics, at times with the help of external actors. Foremost among these is the use of improvised explosive device (IEDs) in Iraq (and now in Afghanistan), which appears to have been conceptually borrowed from the Lebanese Hizballah.[7] Suicide bombers wearing suicide vests or driving bomb-laden vehicles of the type first used in Israel by Palestinian terrorist groups are now used as mass casualty weapons. Al-Qaeda followers, having returned from Iraq and Afghanistan, are learning lessons and adapting these weapons and tactics for their own use throughout the Middle East and Asia.[8] Importantly, tactics proven successful in Iraq are migrating to Afghanistan, especially IEDs and suicide bombings.

Beyond weaponry, jihadists and insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan are learning logistics, forgery, medical care, surveillance and reconnaissance, and media skills. However, there are important distinctions between the skill sets acquired in each conflict. The population density of Iraq, along with its concentration in urban areas, has forced jihadists to adopt greater operational security and to be more clandestine in their actions and has provided a superb laboratory for urban combat. Afghanistan's insurgency, on the other hand, is princi-

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ties, al-Sadr must operate within the broader framework of Shi'a politics in Iraq. In this context, his movement has to take account of the political and religious authority of the Iraqi Shi'a hierarchy headed by Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani—which limits the movement's freedom of action and ability to mount a sustained insurgency with popular support.

[7]   For more on Hizballah's use of combat footage as a psychological warfare instrument, see Frederic M. Wehrey, "A Clash of Wills: Hizballah's Psychological Campaign in South Lebanon," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 13, No. 3, Autumn 2002, pp. 53–74.

[8]   Author interviews with senior governmental and military officials in Oman, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia, 2006. See also H. John Poole, *Tactics of the Crescent Moon: Militant Muslim Combat Methods*, Emerald Isle, N.C.: Posterity Press, 2004, pp. 69–94 and 153–220; and Theodore Karasik and Kim Cragin, "The Arabian Peninsula," Chapter Seven in Angel Rabasa et al., *Ungoverned Territories: Understanding and Reducing Terrorism Risks,* Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-561-AF, 2007.

pally a rural affair, teaching jihadists and insurgents to operate under the extreme conditions of mountain warfare.[9]

The evolution and migration of new terrorist organizations, tactics, and doctrine will be concentrated in areas where government administration is tenuous and borders are porous, both in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as neighboring areas. These so-called ungoverned territories comprise much of Afghanistan's Helmand Province in the southwest and its eastern provinces bordering Pakistan; Pakistan's Northwest Frontier and Baluchestan; Iran's Sistan-va Baluchestan Province (home to its Sunni minority) and Arab-dominated Khuzestan; Iraq's al-Anbar province; Turkey's southeastern territory; and Saudi Arabia's Empty Quarter. By virtue of their isolation and geography, these areas have been havens or thoroughfares for smugglers and dissidents for centuries.[10]

Assuming that current trends continue, southern Afghanistan will continue to be a serious area of concern. The number of Taliban and al-Qaeda attacks against U.S. and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) troops, Afghan security forces, and civilians has risen over the past two years, along with the growing sophistication of tactics and weaponry and the use of suicide attacks.[11] Most of these attacks occur in the south and east of Afghanistan, areas where the Taliban enjoy some popularity among their fellow Pashtuns and where they can cross the border to safe havens in remote Pashtun areas of Pakistan.

Confronting the challenge of ungoverned territories will be especially important in stopping the future influx of foreign terrorist and insurgent volunteers to Iraq and Afghanistan. Since their inception, the Iraqi and Afghan insurgencies have seen their share of religiously motivated fighters making their way to fight the foreign occupation.[12]

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[9] "Iraq Offers Training Opportunities for Gulf Jihadists, but It May Not Be Afghanistan Mark Two," *Gulf States Newsletter*, Vol. 30, No. 783, June 9, 2006.

[10] See Karasik and Cragin, 2007.

[11] United Nations, *Secretary-General's Report to the UN Security Council on the Situation in Afghanistan and Its Implications for International Peace and Security*, August 2005.

[12] Lydia Khalil, "The Transformation of Ansar al-Islam," *Terrorism Monitor*, Jamestown Foundation, Vol. 3, No. 24, December 20, 2005; Anthony Cordesman, *The Iraqi Insur-*

Today, and into the foreseeable future, the influx of foreign terrorists and insurgents is facilitated by strong familial, trade, or religious ties. For example, the senior leadership cadre of Lebanese Hizballah has close familial and educational links to Iraq's al-Sadr family, resulting in a strong impetus to channel support to al-Sadr's Jaysh al-Mahdi.[13] Similarly, large numbers of Syrian and Saudi volunteers with close tribal and cultural links to Iraqis across the border believe it is their duty to fight. The Shammar tribal confederation, which comprises over one million members and straddles Syria, Iraq and Saudi Arabia, has become a transnational conveyor belt for the flow of materiel and Sunni Arab volunteers into Iraq.[14]

Influential jihadi clerics and ideologues based in the Gulf, Pakistan, the Levant, and London are likely to continue driving the recruitment and flow of volunteers.[15] Future audiences for their message will be connected via Internet chat rooms and will be drawn from far-flung areas of the globe; Egypt, Sudan, the United Arab Emirates, Indonesia, Sweden, Chechnya, Somalia, and West Africa are just a few of the

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gency and the Risk of Civil War: Who Are the Players? Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, March 1, 2006; International Crisis Group, *In Their Own Words: Reading the Iraqi Insurgency,* Middle East Report No. 50, February 15, 2006; United States Institute of Peace, *Who Are The Insurgents? Sunni Arab Rebels in Iraq,* Special Report 134, April 2005; Bruce Hoffman, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Iraq*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, OP-127-IPC/CMEPP, 2005; and Michael Eisenstadt and Jeffrey White, *Assessing Iraq's Sunni Arab Insurgency*, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Policy Focus No. 50, December 2005.

[13] This impetus may have been held in check by Hizballah's principal state patron, Iran, which probably feared the escalation of sectarian violence in Iraq.

[14] Saudi National Security Assessment Project, *Fragmented Iraq: Implications for Saudi National Security*, March 15, 2006, p. 22; Karasik and Cragin, 2007.

[15] One important example is the noted Kuwaiti Salafi cleric Hamid al-'Ali, who has emerged as one of the most prolific jihadi writers on Iraq. In his treatise, *Responses to Those Who Forbid the Jihad in Iraq* (2003), al-'Ali raises the specter of secular Ba'athists, Sufis, Shi'a, and nationalist elements stealing the mantle of liberation from foreign Salafi jihadists. Using both emotive and juridical language, his message to his audience is clear: Get in the fight and ignore the "hypocrisy" of the state-sponsored Saudi clergy who endorsed the jihad in Afghanistan during the 1980s but now criminalize participation in current-day struggles. Hamid al-'Ali, "*Al-Rad 'ala min Haram al-Jihad fi al-Iraq*" [The response to those who forbid jihad in Iraq], 2003.

diverse countries of origin for foreign volunteers. Some of these individuals will be well trained and experienced after fighting U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan; others will simply be young men who leave their lives in their respective countries for the ideal of waging jihad against U.S., coalition, Afghan, and Iraqi government forces—even "apostate" populations, such as the Shi'a. Many fighters may enter through routes currently being used, including Pakistan and Iran via Baluchestan and the Iranian cities of Zabol and Zahedan. Damascus may continue to serve as a hub for fighters coming from Eurasia; Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) could provide shelter, food, and training.[16] One of the most crucial pivots in the future flow of foreign fighters, however, may be Iran. Iran is the gateway connecting Afghanistan and Iraq and, as such, could be a barrier, sieve, or doorway for narcotics, weapons, and jihadists.

The peregrinations of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi after the fall of the Taliban regime are instructive in this respect and illustrate the conveyor belt of ungoverned territories and porous borders that binds Iran with Afghanistan, Iraq, the Levant, and the Gulf. After he established his training camp for Levantine jihadists at Herat in 2000, Zarqawi left Afghanistan with more than 300 fighters from his group, Jund al-Sham (Soldiers of Greater Syria), in December 2001 after the fall of Kandahar. During the next 14 months, he entered Iran, moved to the autonomous Kurdish region of Iraq, traveled back and forth between Syria and Iraq, and later stayed in the Ayn al-Hilwah Palestinian refugee camp in South Lebanon. In each area, he found shelter with fellow travelers from the Sunni jihadi movement: Ansar al-Islam in Kurdistan; Gulbaddin Hekmatyar and Saif al-Adel in Iran; and the Asbat al-Ansar in Lebanon. Zarqawi's migrations highlight the importance of treating both Iraq and Afghanistan as a coherent, interconnected security problem, with Iran acting as a sort of linchpin.[17]

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[16] See Steven Stalinsky, *Arab and Muslim Jihad Fighters in Iraq*, The Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), Special Report No. 19, July 27, 2003.

[17] See Mary Ann Weaver, "Inventing al-Zarqawi," *Atlantic Monthly,* July–August 2006, pp. 87–100; and Reuven Paz, "Zarqawi's Strategy in Iraq: Is There a New Al-Qaeda?" *PRISM*, Vol. 3, No. 5, August 2005. This section also reflects information provided by Combined Joint Task Force–7 (CJTF-7) personnel in Baghdad; Kathleen Ridolfo, *A Survey of Armed*

Finally, there is the danger of new types of nonstate terror groups with different structures and doctrines from those of today. One scenario might be the rise of a new generation of Shi'a terror groups, formed in response to escalating Shi'a-Sunni communal violence in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan and energized by the emergence of a Shi'a-led regime in Iraq. Emulating the Hizballah model, these groups could comprise two military wings: a more conventional, indigenous militia branch, as well as an extraterritorial clandestine terrorist wing, patterned after Hizballah's Islamic Jihad Organization (IJO) under Imad Mughniyah, and potentially trained by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force (IRGC-QF). In the midst of rising sectarian violence in the region, these organizations could act as self-declared guardians of embattled Shi'a communities in Iraq, Afghanistan, Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan.

Terrorism and insurgency will remain concerns in Iraq and Afghanistan for the foreseeable future, posing an ongoing challenge to stability in each country and their surrounding regions. This double challenge will drive the need for Iraqi and Afghan governments to build significant capacity to provide internal security with capable police and military forces and to extend good governance and economic opportunity to widely dispersed and disparate communities. It remains to be seen whether the strong central authorities necessary for progress on these fronts will emerge in Kabul and Baghdad, a topic to which we now turn.

The Breakdown of Central Authority in Afghanistan and Iraq

In addition to terrorism and insurgency, the most pressing internal threats to both Iraq and Afghanistan stem from the devolution of formalized political and military power from the central government to sectarian, party, or tribal-based militias.[18] As of this writing, in fact,

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Groups in Iraq, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) Iraq Report, June 4, 2004; "Iraqi Insurgency Groups," GlobalSecurity.org; as well as surveys of open press sources.

[18]   Some theorists of nation-building have argued that internal pacification and the monopolization of violence by the central government are among the core prerequisites for the emergence of national identity. See Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism: A Critical Survey of Recent Theories of Nations and Nationalism*, London: Routledge, 1998, pp. 70–76;

sectarianism and political power struggles were the source of a large portion of the violence wracking Iraq. Episodes of sectarian-related atrocities and ethnic cleansing are sowing the seeds of civil war, while Shi'a parties vying for control in southern Iraq are increasingly engaging each other in internecine violence.[19]

Within both Iraq and Afghanistan, corruption and the resilience of sectarian and tribal loyalties within the governments and the security services will continue to be a problem. According to the U.S. State Department's annual global human rights report for 2005, Iraq's "sectarian militias have dominated police units to varying degrees and in different parts of the country. Ministry of Interior (MOI) police effectiveness was seriously compromised by sectarian influences of militias that infiltrated the MOI, corruption, a culture of impunity, lack of training and, in some instances, by intimidation within the security force." The 2006 human rights report noted that "MOI-affiliated death squads targeted Sunnis and conducted kidnapping raids and killings in Baghdad and its environs, largely with impunity."[20]

In some cases, increased reliance on local power centers and militias may be an intentional policy undertaken by government ministers with strong ties to tribal chiefs or sectarian warlords. Similarly, future regimes may believe that temporarily co-opting or deputizing the illegal paramilitaries is an expedient stop-gap measure until the central security forces are better prepared to conduct internal policing functions.[21] Ultimately, however, this arrangement is a Faustian

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and Anthony Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence*, Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1985, pp. 18, 120.

[19] As of the time of writing, there are signs that sectarian violence is declining, at least in part as a result of U.S. and Iraqi security activities. Whether this improvement is temporary remains to be seen.

[20] U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 2005 (Iraq)*, March 8, 2006; and U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 2006 (Iraq)*, March 6, 2007.

[21] An example is the Afghan government policy of co-opting tribal militias, which it refers to as "community policing." "Kabul's New Strategy Focuses on Pakistan," Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, *Afghan Report*, July 14, 2006, Vol. 5, No. 19.

bargain that may yield some measure of short-term stability but will ultimately weaken central control and, as is already the case in Iraq, push the country toward fragmentation. Having wrested the monopoly of formal military power from the central government, the militias may assume more and more functions that properly belong to the regime: dispensing justice, levying taxes, conscripting military forces, and providing municipal services, to name a few.[22] Foreign policy and diplomacy could also become increasingly decentralized, and militia-controlled territories could take the form of autonomous fiefdoms or, in the idiom of the Sunni jihadists, "Islamic Emirates."[23]

As these "statelets" grow in ambition and power, it could be especially tempting for Iraq's and Afghanistan's neighbors, both governments and nonstate actors, to see them as the real domestic power centers and consequently to intensify patronage or pressure. This would be particularly true in cases where local states perceive the militia-based fiefdoms to be useful allies in a larger proxy war against ideological rivals in the region.[24] Although such a scenario is by no means inevitable, the competition among regional powers with interests and allies in Iraq and Afghanistan—particularly Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan—warrants increased scrutiny.

In Afghanistan, the threat of fragmentation is compounded by the presence of major drug trafficking groups that have amassed considerable fortunes, giving potential and current warlords a significant revenue flow. There is some evidence of cooperation between opium producer-traffickers and Taliban forces, whereby the latter offer protection to the former in return for money, and of ties between producers

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[22] In Iraq, government subsidies to powerful tribal leaders began during the final years of the Saddam regime, a process that Iraqi sociologist Faleh A. Jaber termed the "retribalization" of Iraq. See Jaber's "Shaykhs and Ideologues: Detribalization and Retribalization in Iraq, 1968–1998," *Middle East Report*, Vol. 215, Summer 2000, pp. 28–48.

[23] It is unclear whether Sunni jihadists have the physical wherewithal to establish control over anything more than small areas or towns.

[24] While the most immediate, relevant model for outside sponsorship of warring factions is the Lebanese civil war, another useful precedent is the Spanish Civil War. See Anthony Beevor, *The Battle for Spain: The Spanish Civil War, 1936–1939*, New York: Penguin Press, 2006.

and Afghan government officials.[25] Afghan traffickers are mostly in control in Afghanistan, and foreigners handle the international drug trade from Afghanistan, with Pakistani traffickers among the more sophisticated.

The proliferation of small arms to nongovernmental militias is also a problem in Afghanistan. Despite efforts to disband illegal armed groups, significant numbers of light weapons remain in the country. Warlords and their private militias remain armed, well funded, and numerous. It is estimated that 1,800 armed bands consisting of 100,000 individuals roam the Afghan countryside, a figure that compares unfavorably with the total of 40,000 men in the Afghan National Army.[26] While some of these groups have been co-opted by the Karzai government as part of the "community policing" program, they could present a long-term challenge to the consolidation of government control and effective provincial administration. This will affect U.S. interests in the region by spurring increased demands for security assistance from the Kabul regime, perpetuating the conditions that allow narcotics smuggling and terrorism to flourish and possibly provoking outside intervention by local states.

Regional Threat Perceptions

In assessing U.S. security concerns in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is important to highlight the perceptions and agendas of regional actors,

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[25] David S. Cloud, "Rumsfeld in Tajikistan, Urges Tough Stand Against Taliban," *New York Times*, July 11, 2006; and "Karzai Accepts Jalali Resignation," *BBC News*, September 28, 2005.

[26] Dr. Zalmai Rassoul, the Afghan National Security Advisor, during his address to the International Security Assistance Force Provincial Reconstruction Team's commander conference on November 6, 2005, said, "The illegal armed groups, and there are far too many, pose a threat to good governance generally, and more specifically to the extension of the rule of law and the writ of central government into the provinces. While illegal armed groups continue to roam unencumbered by any respect for the law, corruption will remain widespread and our counternarcotic strategies are unlikely to succeed." See United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, Strategy for Disbanding Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG), November 14, 2005, p. 1.

both governmental and nongovernmental. These concerns will have an important bearing on the development of U.S. security relations with those countries. Many states in the region view the U.S.-led invasions in both countries as not only removing old security dilemmas, but also creating new ones. Chief among these concerns is the general threat of spillover: foreign jihadi veterans returning from Iraq, destabilizing refugee flows, emboldened Shi'a activists in the Gulf, increased sectarian tensions throughout the region, and intensified cross-border smuggling of narcotics and weaponry.[27] More significantly, however, regional governments may see Tehran's alleged push for a nuclear weapon as the direst aftershock of the two conflicts. They may believe that Iranian leaders, having witnessed the lightening-quick U.S. invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, probably calculate that a nuclear weapon is their only viable insurance policy against a similar fate. Ironically, the greatest long-term danger to Afghan and Iraqi security structures from external sources may be the potential overreaction to events, nonparticipation in cooperative ventures, or obstructionist efforts of key regional actors in the Levant and the Gulf, as well as Pakistan.[28]

In addition to these broad concerns, certain regional actors have special concerns about the long-term security threats posed by current and potential developments in the two countries. Among these actors, the Arab Gulf states, Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan have vital interests

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[27] Author interviews with UAE security officials and media representatives, July 2005; and with Omani, UAE, and Saudi officials, 2006. The Salafi threat is especially pertinent given increased perceptions of U.S.-Shi'a collusion in Iraq. An example of Salafi-jihadist views on this issue is 'Abd al-Hasan al-Rifa'i, "Al-Tahalaf al-Rafidi al-Salibi fi al-'Iraq" [The Shi'a-crusader coalition in Iraq], *Manbar Tawhid wa al-Jihad*, undated. In the Levant, events in Iraq have spilled over into Jordan and threatened Israel with rocket strikes and bombings. See Dore Gold and Lt. Col. (res.) Jonathan D. Halevi, "Zarqawi and Israel: Is There a New Jihadi Threat Destabilizing the Eastern Front," *Jerusalem Issue Brief*, Vol. 5, No. 12, December 15, 2005.

[28] Senate Armed Services Committee, "Statement of General John P. Abizaid, United States Army Commander, United States Central Command, Before the House Armed Services Committee on the 2005 Posture of the United States Central Command," March 1, 2005. See, for example, Paul Rivlin and Shmuel Even, *Political Stability in Arab States: Economic Causes and Consequences*, Tel Aviv: Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, Memorandum No. 74, December 2004.

at stake that could affect Iraqi and Afghan political and security outcomes as well as regional stability.

Saudi Arabia and Other Gulf Cooperation Council States

Foremost among the concerns of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states is the impact of a Shi'a-dominated Iraq on Shi'a aspirations in the Gulf.[29] This is closely tied to their alarm over an emboldened, assertive Iran. Riyadh, in particular, perceives the empowerment of Iraq's Shi'a majority not only as a Trojan horse for Persian expansionism in the Gulf but also as a threat to the continued survival of Sunni Arab monarchies across the region. The potential for escalated confrontation between Saudi Arabia and Iran is especially high in a future in which Iraq slips toward greater decentralization and sectarian strife and embattled Iraqi Sunni enclaves look to Saudi Arabia for patronage to match Iranian support for Iraqi Shi'a.[30]

Currently, no Iranian proxy groups seem to be operating openly on the Arabian Peninsula.[31] However, Bahrain would seem to be the most likely target for destabilization. Its 70-percent Shi'a population has long been restive under the rule of the Sunni Khalifa family, especially in light of widespread perceptions of corruption at the highest levels of government.[32] Although most Shi'a violence against the established order in Bahrain is unorganized street violence against foreign-owned businesses (as occurred in 1994–1996 and again in the spring of

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[29] For a broader look at Sunni perceptions of Shi'a ascendancy in Iraq, see Vali Nasr, "Regional Implications of Shi'a Revival in Iraq," *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 3, Summer 2004.

[30] Nawaf Obaid, an advisor to the Saudi government, warned of Saudi intervention on the side of Iraqi Sunnis in a 2006 editorial. See Nawaf Obaid, "Stepping Into Iraq: Saudi Arabia Will Protect Sunnis If the U.S. Leaves," *Washington Post*, November 29, 2006, p. A23. Indeed, Iraqi tribal shaykhs already have visited Riyadh to request Saudi arms to support them in both current and future conflicts with Shi'a militias. Author interviews with senior Saudi officials in Riyadh, May 2006.

[31] There is a small Shi'a presence in Sharjah that could become a proxy under the proper circumstances. Author interviews with UAE security analysts and cultural officials, April 2005, and February, April, and May 2006.

[32] See Daniel L. Byman and Jerrold D. Green, *Political Violence and Stability in the States of the Northern Persian Gulf*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 1999, pp. 32–33.

2004), there are some organized Shi'a militant groups in that country that might have the potential to spread their operations into Qatar. One is the group known as Bahraini Hizballah, which apparently is funded to some degree by the Iranians.[33] Bahraini Hizballah was active during the mid 1990s, when Iran made a conscious effort to destabilize Bahrain. After a number of arrests by Bahraini authorities, however, the organization disappeared from view. It is possible that these cells could reemerge.

Kuwait, where Shi'a make up 30 percent of the population,[34] has not been a hotbed of Shi'a discontent because of its relatively vibrant civil society. Nevertheless, over the years a shadowy group called Kuwaiti Hizballah has surfaced periodically.[35] Although it seems to be an umbrella for a number of Islamist groups and has not posed any real threat to the ruling al-Sabah family, Kuwaiti Hizballah cannot be discounted as a threat to other Gulf emirates in the current era of heightened tensions over the unsettled situation in Iraq, as well as the election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as president of Iran.

Regional fears of Shi'a political ascendancy in the region—stemming from the fall of Saddam, an increasingly assertive Iran, and Hizballah's 2006 war with Israel—are having a growing impact in Washington, where the region is viewed increasingly through a sectarian lens. This offers a compelling framework for understanding the rapidly shifting security environment. Much of its appeal stems from the provocative work of Vali Nasr, who argues that the Sunni backlash against Shi'a ascendancy in the region could result in new outbreaks of conflict and a restructuring of the regional order. Reflecting on Nasr's growing impact in Washington policy circles, including audiences with President Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Francis Fukuyama observed, "The problem with the current Middle East debate is it's

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[33] Byman and Green, 1999, pp. 34–35.

[34] Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook*, "Kuwait," 2005.

[35] Byman and Green, 1999, pp. 37–38.

completely stuck. Nobody knows what to do. . . . Vali Nasr offers a plausible alternative that may gain traction."[36]

With regard to Iran, however, there is a danger that this theory imparts too much religious homogeneity and coherence to what are essentially disparate challenges to the old political order. As Graham Fuller and others have argued, the "rise" of Shi'a movements in Iraq and Lebanon is not so much about Shi'ism per se, but rather about anti-authoritarianism, pan-Arabism, and anti-imperialism.[37] These are exactly the same themes that Egyptian President Gamal 'Abd al-Nasser used against U.S.–allied conservative monarchies in the 1950s and 1960s. To counter these challenges to the old political order, Sunni Arab regimes have deliberately played up their sectarian character; hence, King 'Abdullah of Jordan's infamous warning of a "Shi'ite crescent" on the eve of the Iraqi elections, and President Hosni Mubarak's tactless statement that the loyalty of the Arab Shi'a lies with Iran, not with the states in which they reside.[38]

RAND fieldwork throughout the Gulf Arab states reveals that Shi'a populations there have a nuanced and ambivalent view of Iran.

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[36] For a brief example of Nasr's thesis in light of the summer 2006 Hizballah-Israel conflict, see his op-ed piece, "Old Blood Feud Drives the Mideast's New Power Play," *Los Angeles Times,* August 27, 2006. For Nasr's influence on administration thinking, see Peter Waldman, "Ancient Rift: Rising Academic Sees Sectarian Split Inflaming Mideast," *Wall Street Journal,* August 4, 2006.

[37] Graham Fuller, "The Hizballah-Iran Connection: Model for Sunni Resistance," *Washington Quarterly* (Winter 2006–2007), pp. 139–150. Morten Valbjørn and André Bank have argued that post-Lebanon regional alignments approximate the strategic environment in the 1980s and, more distantly, the 1950s, when the region was split between monarchists and pan-Arab nationalists, embodied in the charismatic figure of Egyptian President Gamal 'Abd al-Nasser. See, "Signs of a New Arab Cold War: The 2006 Lebanon War and the Sunni-Shi'i Divide," *Middle East Report* (Spring 2007).

[38] King 'Abdallah's statement was published in *al-Ra'y,* January 6, 2005; Mubarak's was carried on al-Arabiya TV, April 9, 2006. Also, see Anonymous, "Tactless Mubarak Provokes Reassertion of National Loyalties by Gulf Arab Shi'as," *Gulf States Newsletter,* Vol. 30, No. 779, April 14, 2006; Fuller (Winter 2006–2007). For Saudi Arabia's role in playing the "sectarian card," see Gregory Gause III, "Saudi Arabia: Iraq, Iran, the Regional Power Balance, and the Sectarian Question," *Strategic Insights,* Vol. 6, No. 2, March 2007.

They regard it as a spiritual patron, not a political ideal.[39] Even among armed Shi'a groups that enjoy substantial Iranian support, such as the Lebanese Hizballah and the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council (SIIC, formerly the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq or SCIRI), Iranian influence has not translated into Iranian control. These groups would first and foremost follow their domestic agendas, carefully weighing the risks and benefits presented by Iranian patronage. But a U.S. policy paradigm that treats these Shi'a groups as monolithic and subservient could end up amplifying the very Iranian influence that Washington seeks to mitigate.

Aside from the issue of Shi'a activism, Iraq may also be perceived as an increased threat to Saudi Arabia and GCC states if it evolves over the longer term along a trajectory that is nationalistic, belligerent, and uncooperative with emerging regional security structures. It is important to note, however, that for credible threat perceptions to firmly take root among Iraq's neighbors, the government in Baghdad would have to surmount two significant obstacles: (1) developing competent military capabilities with an emphasis on power projection and (2) overcoming its internal divisions and sectarian strife. An Iraqi government that develops along these lines and emphasizes Iraqi "rights" and external threats to Iraqi sovereignty—especially if combined with the failure to comply with international border agreements (e.g., with Kuwait and/or Iran)—would sound alarm bells in neighboring Arab Gulf states and Iran.

Turkey

Turkey's most pressing concerns in Iraq revolve around Iraqi Kurdish aspirations for an independent or broadly autonomous Kurdistan—especially one with oil-rich Kirkuk as its capital—resulting from Iraq's disintegration or formation of a loose confederation. Ankara fears that independence or robust autonomy could have a "demonstration effect"

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[39] RAND discussions with Shi'a religious leaders and activists in Eastern Province, Saudi Arabia, March 2007, and Manama, Bahrain, November 2006.

that inspires separatism among its own domestic Kurdish population.[40] Exacerbating this fear is the presence in Iraqi Kurdistan of some 5,000 members of the violent Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), a Kurdish terrorist group that uses the northeastern region of Iraq as a safe haven. In addition, Turkey has a deep interest in protecting the small Turkmen minority, most of whom reside in northern Iraq.

PKK attacks inside Turkey from its bases in northern Iraq killed tens of Turkish soldiers and hundreds of civilians in 2006 alone.[41] Ankara's anxiety has deepened over U.S. and Iraqi failure to clamp down on this group. Turkey has largely restrained its military from going after the PKK in Iraq, although it reportedly maintains a small force there to watch or counter PKK activities.[42] Turkish restraint has been a product of its desired accession to the European Union (EU) and its relationships with the United States, its long-time NATO ally. But continued PKK attacks, inaction by U.S. or Iraqi forces, and efforts by some EU members to prevent Turkish membership could lead in the near term to sizable cross-border Turkish military operations to oust the PKK and, potentially, to forestall Kurdish advances toward independence. There is certainly a precedent for this approach: Throughout the 1990s, Turkish military forces frequently mounted "hot pursuit" operations against PKK strongholds and training camps in northern Iraq.

Iran

Having considered the perception of Gulf Arab regimes and Turkey, we now turn to Tehran's view of Iraq and Afghanistan. Given Iranian allies and proxies in major Iraqi ministries and security forces, Tehran may believe that it has unprecedented influence over Iraq's future devel-

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[40] See Henri J. Barkey, "Turkey and Iraq: The Perils (and Prospects) of Proximity," Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, Special Report 141, July 2005.

[41] "Some 91 Turkish Soldiers Killed in PKK Attacks in Seven Months," Anatolia News Agency, reported by Xinhua News Agency, September 10, 2006.

[42] Henri J. Barkey and Ellen Laipson, "Iraqi Kurds and Iraq's Future," *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 12, No. 4, Winter 2005, p. 71.

opment.[43] Beyond Iraq's borders, Iranian leaders may see the political ascendancy of Iraqi Shi'a as an historic opportunity to overturn the traditional dominance of Sunni Arab governments in the region, diminish the potential for future aggression by Iraq, and weaken what one Iranian analyst called the "security belt" of U.S.-backed regimes encircling Iran, including Afghanistan and Pakistan.[44]

There is also an ideological dimension to Iran's ambitions that will continue to be especially worrisome to Sunni Arab regimes in the region, particularly tribally based monarchies. Khomeini's concept of *vilayet-e faqih* (guardianship of the jurists) is antimonarchical, antitribal, and notionally populist, and it accords unequivocal primacy to the clerical class. Yet, despite these universalist pretensions, Iranian foreign policy today is strongly informed by an exclusivist sense of Persian nationalism, particularly under the administration of President Ahmadinejad. It is not surprising, therefore, that the potential export of this ideology, along with the Iranian president's messianic bravado, is viewed by Sunni regimes throughout the Arab world as almost a threat to their existence. Moreover, since its inception, the Islamic Republic has conceived of itself as a beacon for Third World anti-imperial movements. Today, it continues to portray itself to regimes in Latin America, Africa, and Southeast Asia as a champion against the predations of globalization and Westernization. Ahmadinejad's populist posturing on the nuclear issue reflects these themes: Iran considers its full uranium enrichment cycle to be a development imperative that Western status-quo powers are greedily blocking. On a more concrete level, Iran has explored numerous economic initiatives in Africa and Latin America, often with the expectation that they will "buy" it nonaligned diplomatic support in the United Nations (UN). The efficacy of this strategy, especially in terms of truly easing Tehran's strategic isolation, remains unknown.

To achieve its goals in Iraq, Tehran appears to aid, via its clandestine Qods Force, insurgent attacks on coalition troops and the Iraqi

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[43] For Iranian policy in Iraq, see Kamran Taremi, "Iranian Foreign Policy Towards Occupied Iraq, 2003–05," *Middle East Policy,* Vol. 12, No. 4, Winter 2005, pp. 28–46.

[44] Author phone interview with Tehran-based political scientist, December 7, 2005.

Security Forces (ISF) to keep the United States preoccupied. Yet Tehran ultimately fears the escalation of the current strife into full-fledged civil war; were this to happen, the virulent anti-Shi'ism of the Salafi jihadi insurgents would almost certainly force Iran into an unwanted entanglement. For the time being, Iran is constructing a contingent capability against this scenario by supporting a number of militant Shi'a groups—not only as an insurance policy against the ill effects of sectarian strife but also as leverage against a central government that might swing too blatantly toward an anti-Iranian policy. At the same time, it continues to devote significant resources to its most viable instruments of influence in Iraq: "soft power" assets, such as humanitarian aid, the provision of municipal services to the southern part of the country, payments to political allies, and the spread of pro-Iranian propaganda via its popular Arabic TV station. Iranian leaders see no contradiction in simultaneously pursuing lethal and nonlethal policy levers.[45]

A similar Iranian strategy holds true with respect to Afghanistan, which is a somewhat lower priority for Iranian policymakers. One Iranian scholar described Iraq as the "strategic prize," while Afghanistan was labeled "reserve leverage."[46] Nevertheless, events in Afghanistan have the potential to provoke overt Iranian military intervention, as evidenced by Tehran's near invasion of the country in 1998 over the Taliban's murder of Iranian diplomats.

Today, Iran continues to have a number of pressing concerns regarding the political future of Afghanistan. The first, obviously, is to prevent the reemergence of another Taliban-like regime in Kabul; the former Taliban regime's ties with nuclear-armed Pakistan preoccupied Tehran during much of the latter half of the 1990s. No less importantly, Iranian leaders seek to stem the increasing flow of opium from Afghanistan, which has made Iran one of the world's major thoroughfares for drug trafficking. To this end, Tehran has undertaken a number of bilateral initiatives with Kabul, such as police training, narcotics intelligence-sharing, and border control, as well as partici-

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[45] Kenneth Katzman, *Iran's Influence in Iraq,* Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report for Congress, The Library of Congress, Order Code RS22323, November 15, 2005.

[46] Author phone interview with Tehran-based political scientist, December 7, 2005.

pating in multinational counternarcotics talks.[47] Third, although Iran initially supported U.S. objectives during the December 2001 Bonn talks, where it successfully mediated among disputing Afghan factions and had a positive influence on stabilizing post-Taliban Afghanistan, it now worries that Kabul's long-term partnership with the United States could provide a staging ground for a U.S. attack on Iran. In addition, U.S.-Iranian tensions over the Iranian nuclear program could cause Iran to pursue more-confrontational policies toward Afghanistan. Finally, Tehran wants to guarantee the unobstructed flow of the Hirmand River from Afghanistan into Iran. Blockage of this waterway by the Taliban, and more recently in 2004 by the Karzai government, wreaked havoc on the drought-plagued Iranian border provinces and become a major source of bilateral tension.[48]

Given this need for water security and the worsening problem of drug trafficking, Tehran has strong incentives to support a government in Kabul that can extend its administrative control into the remote hinterland. However, this is tempered by fear of an overly pro-U.S. Afghan government that accepts a U.S. military presence perceived as aimed at encircling Iran. Thus, to help protect its interests, Iran has cultivated excellent relations with tribal leaders in the Herat province and has emerged as a major donor of reconstruction aid. Yet just as it does in Iraq, Tehran balances these benign policies with more-lethal instruments, such as supporting indigenous paramilitaries under the umbrella of the Sepah-e Muhammad ("Soldiers of Muhammad").

Tehran views these latter elements as especially important surrogates after the removal of Iran's ally in Herat, the Tajik warlord Ismail Khan, and the subsequent transfer of U.S. forces to a north-

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[47] See Kaveh Afrasiabi and Abbas Maleki, "Iran's Foreign Policy After September 11," *Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Vol. 9, No. 2, Winter–Spring 2003, p. 258.

[48] Stoppage of the river by the Karzai government in 2004 fueled widespread speculation in the Iranian press that the United States was using the Hirmand to pressure Tehran. "Iranian Official Calls for Implementation of 1972 Agreement on Hirmand River," Foreign Broadcasting Information Service (FBIS), IAP20050201000031 Tehran IRNA (Internet Version-WWW) in English, 1255 GMT, February 1, 2005; "Southeastern Iran Seeks Its Share from Hirmand River in Afghanistan," FBIS IAP20041110000084 Tehran Mehr News Agency WWW-Text in English, 1756 GMT, November 10, 2004.

western airbase at Shindand. Situated less than 100 kilometers from the Iranian border, Shindand has emerged as a central preoccupation for Iranian strategists, who worry about its use for U.S. surveillance missions. More broadly, Tehran is concerned about the base as the most proximate link in a "web of encirclement," tying America's naval presence in the Gulf with a larger network of airfields and logistical hubs in Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, and Pakistan.[49]

Pakistan

Except for the relatively short period of Taliban rule in Kabul from 1996 to 2001, Pakistan's relationship with Afghanistan has been one of estrangement and distrust since Pakistani independence in 1947. Unresolved border disputes, Afghan claims on Pashtun and Baluch regions of Pakistan, and "predatory" Pakistani behavior toward Afghanistan over the years form the basis of this perennial antagonism. For almost two decades, Pakistan was host to a significant number of Afghans who migrated after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. In fact, more than a million Afghans still live in the border towns.[50] Islamabad views Afghanistan as its own "backyard," providing it with strategic depth in its ongoing competition with India. Thus, its cooperation, or even subservience, remains a vital Pakistani interest. Islamabad seeks effective means to exert a strong influence on Kabul's policies. Its most serious concern is the rise of a pro-Indian government in Kabul that provides haven and other support to Baluchi insurgents and other separatist elements in Pakistan.[51]

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[49] "Iranian Radio Criticizes Reported U.S. Plans for Military Base in West Afghanistan," FBIS, IAP20041220000065 Mashhad, Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran External Service, in Dari, 1330 GMT, December 19, 2004; Ron Synovitz, "Afghanistan: How Would Permanent U.S. Bases Impact Regional Interests?" Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Vol. 23, February 2005.

[50] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Statistical Yearbook, 2005* (Provisional).

[51] See Barnett R. Rubin and Abubakar Siddique, "Resolving the Pakistan-Afghanistan Stalemate," Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, Special Report 176, October 2006; International Crisis Group, *Pakistan's Tribal Areas: Appeasing the Militants,* Asia

At the time of writing, elements of the Taliban and al-Qaeda, including their leadership, are enjoying a sanctuary in Waziristan and other parts of the autonomous North West Frontier Province (NWFP) of Pakistan along its border with Afghanistan. In an effort to maintain its partnership with the United States in the "war on terror," Pakistan has deployed tens of thousands of troops in Waziristan and other Pashtun-dominated tribal areas to counter al-Qaeda and other militant groups. In addition, the Pakistani government has tried to co-opt local tribes and radical Islamist groups in those regions—efforts that have failed and have led to religiously inspired violence that has challenged the stability of Pervez Musharraf's regime.[52] Neither military action nor co-option efforts have succeeded in curbing an increasing number of more-lethal Taliban attacks against U.S., NATO, and Afghan forces and civilians across the border. At the same time, Islamabad has been concerned that a nationalist insurgency in Pakistani Baluchistan is receiving support from Indian agents in Afghanistan who are being allowed by Kabul to operate in the south as part of Indian-supported reconstruction efforts and Indian consular activities.

The more that Pakistan perceives Indian (and Iranian) influence in Afghanistan and Afghan government policies that are less accommodating to Pakistani interests, the more it is likely to seek to destabilize Afghanistan. This could involve actively supporting Taliban activities in the frontier areas and limiting or denying Afghan trade through Pakistan (upon which Afghanistan relies heavily for access to global markets). Given Pakistani success using such means in the past, the possibility that Pakistan would send its own troops into Afghanistan to protect its vital interests seems remote, even in the event of a more hard-line or radical government in Islamabad.

Report No. 125, December 2006; and Ali A. Jalali, "The Future of Afghanistan," *Parameters*, Spring 2006, pp. 4-19.

[52] Some 300 people died in summer 2007 during bombings and clashes related to the seizure of Islamabad's Red Mosque by an extremist group.

Threat Perceptions and Alternative Outcomes in Iraq and Afghanistan

As mentioned several times in this chapter, alternative political and security outcomes in Iraq and Afghanistan certainly would affect U.S., regional, and local threat perceptions. For example, it is important to note that what may appear from a U.S. perspective to be a clear threat from Iran may be perceived quite differently in Baghdad and Kabul. Moreover, within these countries, there may be significant variations in threat perceptions depending on the sectarian composition and ideological or political character of future regimes. We discuss these perceptions in the context of our compatibility-security domain introduced in Chapter One.

Future governments in Kabul and Baghdad that are situated toward the high end of the compatibility spectrum and choose to align themselves closely with U.S. interests could incur a host of risks, including opposition from their own populace or suspicion from regional neighbors. For example, the strategic partnership that was signed between the United States and Afghanistan in 2004 has created anxieties for some of the neighboring countries, especially Iran. And if India were increasingly allowed to exert influence in Afghanistan, the Pakistanis would perceive this as a grave threat. A government in Baghdad that is not only close to the United States in terms of military ties but also allows U.S. forces to be based in Iraq over the longer term, would certainly be considered threatening by Iran—which sees itself as potentially encircled by a superpower that poses a threat to the survival of the Islamic Republic. In addition, if the Iraqi and Afghan governments continue to enjoy close relations with the United States and develop free-market and democratic institutions, they are likely to unnerve neighboring authoritarian and theocratic regimes. These realities suggest that the United States must be careful about how conspicuous its relations with the two countries are as it seeks to deepen its security cooperation activities.

Such cooperation will surely be needed. Even if these governments are able to improve internal security through a combination of political co-option, police action, and U.S. and coalition assistance, the

threat posed by terrorists, insurgents, and other illegally armed groups will remain a problem. The threat will be a matter of degree (i.e., it will shift along the security spectrum), but it is not likely to disappear in the foreseeable future. Some Sunnis in Iraq may continue to feel disenfranchised and pursue violent insurgency; al-Qaeda is likely to continue to seek ways to attack Iraqis and their foreign supporters. In the same vein, Afghanistan's stability may still be threatened by terrorism and insurgency from al-Qaeda and the Taliban; much of this depends upon the existence of sanctuaries across the border in Pakistan.

If the governments in Afghanistan and Iraq were to sit in the middle of the compatibility-security domain, they might chart a policy course that supports some U.S. interests and opposes others. This, too, would color threat perceptions in each country. For example, a Shi'a-dominated, Islamist government in Iraq might view Iran as less threatening and a potential partner in some areas, but it might also be concerned that Iran poses a threat to Iraqi independence. There is the distinct possibility that if the Shi'a political parties and militias traditionally allied with Iran were able to govern effectively, quell dissent, and develop a substantial national military capability, they could jettison or temper their previous loyalty to Iran. In this case, an emboldened Shi'a-dominated Iraq could emerge as a major regional competitor to Iran and a rival claimant for the mantle of Shi'a leadership. For example, it could develop Najaf—one of the most revered sites in Shi'a Islam—to rival or even replace the Iranian city of Qom as a center of Shi'a learning.[53] Whether partnering with Iran or in competition with it, such a state could be seen as threatening by Sunni Arab countries as well as the Sunni minority in Iraq.

As one moves toward greater incompatibility and security (the upper left quadrant of Figure 1.2), authoritarian regimes emerge whose policies could contradict U.S. interests in many areas. Examples might include resurgence of a nationalist strongman in Iraq or of the Taliban in Afghanistan. Regardless of their stance toward cooperation

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[53] Angel Rabasa, Cheryl Benard, Peter Chalk, C. Christine Fair, Theodore W. Karasik, Rollie Lal, Ian O. Lesser, and David E. Thaler, *The Muslim World After 9/11*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-246-AF, 2004, p. 129.

with the United States, such future regimes could pursue internal security policies against terrorism and insurgency that are antithetical to broader U.S. principles of promoting democracy, transparency, and human rights. In both Afghanistan and Iraq, this outcome would be especially worrisome. Throughout the history of the two countries, totalitarian and xenophobic regimes have enacted draconian measures toward internal dissidents and rival sectarian groups. At the same time, such regimes may well prove able to establish a modicum of order when previous governments and policies have failed. Such cases would likely force a strategic quandary upon Washington about whether to tolerate or tacitly endorse the suppression of internal terrorism and insurgency by such harsh means or oppose those policies with more-vigorous measures, such as sanctions or intervention. In some cases, vital U.S. national interests may impel the United States to cooperate with and support such a government—especially after years of frustrating attempts to bring stability to those nations. Conversely, these uncooperative governments could actually play willing host to violent insurgents and terrorists, co-opting them or channeling their energies against the United States and regional rivals.

State failure or the absence of central governing structures in Afghanistan and Iraq would magnify the threat of insurgency and terrorism spreading outside their borders. All surrounding states would be affected; the consequences of spillover for Iraq's and Afghanistan's neighbors would be significant, including the danger of intervention and clashes among regional states. Large numbers of refugees could flow across the borders of neighboring states, releasing transnational terrorists from safe havens and launching unbridled tribal, sectarian, and internecine violence. If either country became ungovernable, the territories would be ripe for smuggling and jihadist exportation—via southeast Turkey; Khuzestan and Sistan va-Baluchestan provinces in Iran; northeastern Syria; Pakistan's NWFP; and Saudi Arabia's northern border province, al-Jawf.

Here and elsewhere, we have treated Iraq and Afghanistan as independent entities when describing potential outcomes. While much of the evolution of Iraq is largely independent from that of Afghanistan, they can affect each other in important ways both internally and

externally. As indicated earlier in this chapter, terrorist tactics tend to migrate from Iraq to Afghanistan; thus, if Iraq moves toward state failure and terrorist groups continue to thrive there, it would be much more challenging for Afghanistan to move toward a compatible-secure outcome. Likewise, if both states failed, the destabilizing effects across the regions would be much more pronounced and widespread than if only one failed.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has explored the threats to stability and security in Iraq and Afghanistan as they are viewed by groups and authorities in the two countries and by various actors in the surrounding regions. Whether rooted in porous borders, sectarian marginalization, weak economies, or failing central governments, the future challenges to stability in these critical countries are dynamic and evolving. If poorly managed, the security environments of Iraq and Afghanistan could threaten broader U.S. access and economic interests in the region, necessitate burdensome U.S. force commitments, provide safe havens for terrorists, or spark proxy conflict among the region's major powers.

For these reasons, future U.S. strategy toward Iraq and Afghanistan must be adaptive, holistic, and inclusive of other regional partners. Threat assessments and future security policies must be broad and encompassing and should address myriad root causes for instability: demography, economics, education, media, sectarian representation, the professionalization of the officer corps, and border control, to name a few. It is in this context that the United States must explore long-term relationships with Kabul and Baghdad and with other regional actors—a topic we address in the next chapter.

Alternative Security Relationships

What types of bilateral security relationships might the United States seek with Iraq and Afghanistan over the long term? Given the uncertainty of political orientations and security outcomes in each country, the United States must be prepared to pursue a variety of options. The varied military and political contexts in Afghanistan and Iraq suggest that the United States will need to consider different types of security relationships with each, even if the menu of options may be similar. Moreover, as discussed in Chapter Two, U.S. bilateral security relationships will influence and be influenced by regional security concerns and arrangements. Thus, the United States will need to consider the regional security arrangements that currently exist and those that might emerge. Even if the United States is not an active participant in certain multilateral frameworks, it can encourage arrangements that promote stability and cooperation and are conducive to favorable outcomes in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In this chapter, we first consider the regional context in which bilateral relationships with Iraq and Afghanistan might develop and recommend a layered regional security framework that emphasizes cooperative bilateral and multilateral arrangements and evolves over time. By security framework, we mean the dominant pattern of security relationships in the region (e.g., cooperative or competitive, bilateral or multilateral). Next, we address the question of potential bilateral security relationships between the United States and Iraq and Afghanistan respectively. We offer a spectrum of security relationship types, including formal defense pacts, enduring strategic partnerships, more-

limited situational partnerships, and minimal or no ties. We argue that the United States should seek a closer strategic partnership with a cooperative Afghanistan and a flexible situational partnership with a cooperative Iraq but that it should be prepared to adjust those relationships to accommodate a variety of political outcomes. The final section outlines the bilateral and multilateral security cooperation activities that would be appropriate for the United States to consider under this range of circumstances.

The Context of Future Regional Security Frameworks

The United States will need to place any security relationship and cooperation it pursues with Iraq and Afghanistan in the context of regional security structures that extra-regional or regional actors may construct (both among regional actors and between regional actors and external actors, such as the United States). In this section, we emphasize potential regional security structures in the traditional Middle East (i.e., the Arab League states, Iran, Israel and Turkey). But the key tenets discussed in this section could apply to Afghanistan and Central and South Asia as much as they do to Iraq and the Middle East. In fact, over time, emerging multilateral security structures in the Middle East may include Afghanistan and perhaps even Pakistan, particularly when addressing issues of cross-regional concern like terrorism or narcotics trade.[1]

It is important to note at the outset that although we offer a range of regional framework options, only one option has prevailed in the Middle East to date—namely, competitive bilateral security arrange-

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[1] At present, Afghanistan's regional links are more closely tied to South Asia (it joined the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, SAARC), and more recently, to Central Asia (President Karzai attended the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, or SCO, summit in June 2006). SAARC was established in 1985 with eight member countries. The regional organization encourages cooperation in agriculture, rural development, culture, health, narcotics control, and antiterrorism. These core issues exclude political or contentious issues, such as Kashmir. Afghanistan joined SAARC in December 2005. That said, it is difficult to identify Afghanistan as belonging to any single region, which is why it is exploring participation in Central Asian regional security arrangements, such as the SCO, as well.

ments. Indeed, attempts to construct a different, more cooperative type of regional security framework face a variety of well-known constraints. These include power imbalances, an inclination to align with outside powers rather than with regional neighbors, an antipathy to multilateral arrangements proposed by the West, concerns about external intervention based on a history of Western domination, a variety of regional rivalries (among states, sects, ethnic groups, tribes, and regions), and the ever-present Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Added to this list of traditional impediments is the legacy of the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq, which has had a destabilizing impact across the region and has undermined U.S. credibility in advocating new types of regional security arrangements.

Still, despite these limitations, it is important to identify the range of options open to U.S. policymakers and to regional actors themselves. Indeed, both U.S. and regional policymakers are beginning to consider options beyond bilateralism. Here we outline four types of regional security structures as possible options, although in practice these options can overlap:

- *Competitive bilateral arrangements* include military alliances between countries that are directed against a particular threat or between an extra-regional actor who relies on a regional "pillar" to balance against a regional adversary (such as the American reliance on Iran prior to the 1979 revolution and on Iraq prior to the 1991 Gulf War). Such relations have generally characterized Middle East security arrangements to date, making this option a continuation of the status quo.
- *Cooperative bilateral arrangements* foster agreements and relationships between states that are not necessarily directed against a specific threat, although other actors might perceive it as such. NATO's Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI), which engages Middle East states bilaterally in a variety of cooperative security activities, is an example.
- *Competitive multilateral alliances* are developed among regional actors against a specific threat and intentionally exclude selected regional actors. Contemporary examples include the idea of cre-

ating a Gulf collective security arrangement to counter Iranian influence or NATO's original mandate to counter the Soviets in Europe.

- *Cooperative multilateral arrangements* are generally inclusive and have diverse regional purposes. There are no such arrangements in the Middle East. Examples from other regions include the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) or the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum (ARF).

An assessment of the four options—including consideration of the limitations of each—demonstrates the dangers of the current reliance on competitive bilateral relationships and suggests the need to place U.S. security relations with Iraq and Afghanistan in the context of enhanced bilateral and multilateral cooperative relationships. That said, the aforementioned traditional constraints on moving beyond competitive bilateral security relationships in the region mean that any attempt to forge new regional security arrangements will require a significant and high-level U.S. effort as well as genuine regional interest in investing in such arrangements.

Continued Competitive Bilateralism

In developing security structures in the Middle East, countries have generally opted for external security partners and guarantees rather than rely on regional, multilateral arrangements for national security and regime survival. For example, after the 1991 Gulf War, Arab efforts to form a collective defense organization (the Damascus Declaration initiative) to maintain Persian Gulf stability, drawing on Egyptian and Syrian troops, failed because Arab Gulf states preferred defense ties with the United States rather than relying on neighbors to guarantee their security.

Today, the growing influence of Iran is becoming one of the defining challenges to security in the region following the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, and it is likely to feed into regional inclinations toward

competitive balancing.[2] While there will be a strong temptation by U.S. planners to counter Iranian influence by forging alliances directed against Iran, planners should also be cognizant of the significant drawbacks of relying solely on a competitive bilateral approach.[3] Previous reliance on Gulf partners (such as Iran, Iraq, or Saudi Arabia) to balance other actors in the region has led to inherent instability. Gulf instability is particularly endemic because of power asymmetries in the region—asymmetries that have led to heavier U.S. military presence— and the reluctance of regional parties to align with each other.[4]

Cooperative Bilateralism: Enhancing Cooperative Partnerships

Rather than rely on one or two key allies to counter regional threats, the United States can invest in developing a range of cooperative partnerships across the region to build indigenous capabilities that might help address a multitude of challenges in the broader Middle East and Central and South Asian regions. The United States can also continue to broaden such relationships by focusing on cooperation in such areas as infrastructure or civil society development. For example, U.S. assistance to Afghanistan includes not only traditional security assistance to build the latter's military capacity but also hundreds of millions of

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[2] Author meetings in December 2005 in Jordan, Egypt, and Israel underscored this concern about the influence of Iran, especially its infiltration into Iraq.

[3] At the time of writing, such an alliance against Iran seemed to be in the making between the United States, its Sunni Arab allies, and potentially Israel. See, for example, Anthony Shadid, "With Iran Ascendant, U.S. Is Seen at Fault," *Washington Post,* January 30, 2007, p. A1; Michael Slackman and Hassan M. Fattah, "In Public View, Saudis Counter Iran in Region," *New York Times,* February 6, 2007, p. A1; Jay Solomon, "U.S.-Arab Alliance Aims to Deter Terrorism, Iran," *Wall Street Journal,* August 9, 2007, p. 6; and Robin Wright, "U.S. Vs. Iran: Cold War, Too," *Washington Post,* July 29, 2007, p. B1. A proposed multibillion-dollar arms package for Gulf allies, Egypt, and Israel, announced in July 2007, is a further component in the formation of an anti-Iranian coalition. See Mark Mazzetti and Helene Cooper, "U.S. Arms Plan for Mideast Aims to Counter Iranian Power," *New York Times,* July 31, 2007, p. 6.

[4] For an elaboration of this dilemma, see Andrew Rathmell, Theodore W. Karasik, and David C. Gompert, *A New Persian Gulf Security System,* Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, IP-248-CMEPP, 2003.

dollars for reconstruction and governance.[5] Indeed, cooperative bilateral relationships extend far beyond the narrow area of military cooperation to address a range of social, economic, and political development needs of partner countries. Iraq and Afghanistan can potentially serve as key partners in this broader regional strategy, depending on the political and security outcomes in those two countries.

Starting in June 2004 through the ICI, NATO initiated a number of bilateral dialogues that exemplify cooperative security partnerships. The ICI is opening NATO's doors to the broader region, focusing particularly on establishing bilateral security cooperation with individual Gulf states (all of the GCC states except Saudi Arabia and Oman have joined). Bilateral activities through the ICI include advice on defense reform, planning, and budgeting; military-to-military cooperation, exercises, and training activities that contribute to interoperability; antiterrorism cooperation, including intelligence sharing; nonproliferation cooperation; cooperating against illegal trafficking; and civil emergency planning, including disaster assistance.[6]

Although the ICI is an example of a cooperative bilateral partnership, some in the region might view it as a way for NATO to penetrate the region and isolate Iran, in essence laying the foundation for a new competitive collective security organization in the Gulf. As we discuss below, such competitive arrangements are likely to backfire by strengthening hard-liners in Iran and heightening anti-Western sentiment in the region. In fact, any U.S.-led cooperative bilateralism (and NATO is largely associated with the United States in the Middle East) may be viewed as an anti-Iranian alliance. But keeping such relationships transparent and focusing on "softer" cooperative activities (e.g., edu-

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[5]   See, for example, U.S. Department of State, "United States Is Leading Donor of Assistance to Afghanistan," fact sheet, February 1, 2006. On the importance of integrating other U.S. agencies efforts (such as USAID) with military objectives in key countries like Afghanistan, see United States Agency for International Development (USAID), "USAID Briefing by Lt. General Barno on Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan," Washington, D.C.: USAID Headquarters, December 15, 2005.

[6]   For more details on the ICI, see NATO, "Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI): Reaching Out to the Broader Middle East," 2007. Also see Matteo Legrenzi, "NATO in the Gulf: Who Is Doing Whom a Favor?" *Middle East Policy,* Vol. 14, No. 1, Spring 2007.

cation exchanges, disaster-relief planning, or other capacity-building exercises) may limit anti-American backlash and potentially destabilizing countermoves by Iran. The United States is more likely to generate goodwill and reliable partners if its investment in key allies is perceived as an effort to improve those countries' own stability rather than solely as a means to serve U.S. interests in confronting Iran. Although many of the GCC states, for example, share U.S. concerns about growing Iranian influence, they are also wary of pursuing openly confrontational stances toward their larger neighbor.[7]

Competitive Multilateralism: NATO in the Middle East?

As discussed previously, concern about growing Iranian influence in the region is leading some to consider the value of a regional collective security framework tied to NATO. An expanded NATO presence certainly matches the regional preference for extra-regional security guarantees, which would help share the burden for maintaining regional order. Regional players who have traditionally resisted a NATO role in the region, such as Israel, are now becoming more amenable to the idea.[8] The majority of GCC states have shown interest in NATO through the ICI, and even Saudi Arabia has been quietly holding talks at NATO to explore its future relationship with the organization. Despite initial resistance, Cairo is also opening up channels with NATO, having hosted the Secretary General in November 2005 and sending high-level delegations to consult with NATO officials in Brussels.

However, NATO still has a serious credibility problem in the region, particularly in the Levant, where many view it as a U.S.-dominated Western institution hostile to Arab interests. The reluctance to draw on NATO to respond to the crisis in Lebanon in the summer of 2006 was in part related to this perception. Some Arab states also

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[7]   Author discussions with officials, analysts, and academics in all GCC countries during multiple visits to the region in 2006. Also see Dalia Dassa Kaye and Frederic M. Wehrey, "A Nuclear Iran: The Reactions of Neighbors," *Survival,* Vol. 49, No. 2 (Summer 2007), pp. 111–128.

[8]   On these points, see Yossi Alpher, *The Future of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Critical Trends Affecting Israel,* Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, Special Report 149, September 2005.

view the organization as a backdoor way for the West to push Arab states into cooperating with Israel and as a mechanism for the West to impose democracy on the region by force. The legitimacy problem would be difficult to overcome if NATO were the backbone of a new regional security framework.

The military nature of such a NATO-centered alliance could also increase the sense of vulnerability among regional actors excluded from new partnerships (e.g., Iran). This could create a competitive regional dynamic that might spark the creation of regional counteralliances hostile to U.S. interests, perhaps led by other extra-regional actors, such as China or Russia. This dynamic may already be surfacing in the Central Asian region.

Indeed, many now perceive the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) as developing into a competitive multilateral security organization that serves as a vehicle for China and Russia to curb U.S. influence. Although the SCO began as a confidence-building mechanism, the possibility of Iranian membership (Iran is currently an observer) has led some to view the organization as developing into an anti-Western institution.[9] Others argue that because of the friction between Russia and China, the SCO is not likely to pose a significant threat to U.S. interests in Central Asia.[10] Still, if the SCO moves in an anti-Western direction, the United States might encourage Afghan participation in more cooperative, multilateral forums—for example, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), where the emphasis is less on contentious and divisive political issues than on cooperation in a variety of functional areas, such as agriculture, health, narcotics control, and antiterrorism. That said, from Afghanistan's perspective, its political and economic links to Central Asia may make it reluctant to distance itself from the SCO, and it may see some benefit to developing relationships with China and Russia to hedge against a change in its relations with the United States in the future. These potential

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[9]   See, for example, Edward Cody, "Iran Seeks Aid in Asia in Resisting the West," *Washington Post,* June 16, 2006, p. 14.

[10]   See Lionel Beehner, *The Rise of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization,* New York: Council on Foreign Relations, June 12, 2006.

outcomes suggest that competitive multilateralism may worsen rather than improve the situation for the United States in specific countries and in the region.

Cooperative Multilateralism

Given the drawbacks of a competitive multilateral arrangement, U.S. planners might consider supporting cooperative multilateral regional frameworks, either at the regional (e.g., Middle East) or subregional (e.g., the Gulf states) level. The United States could also provide more support for existing cooperative multilateral structures that now include Afghanistan, such as SAARC.

A Broad Middle East Option. The idea for a broad regional security structure in the Middle East is not new, and international and regional leaders have floated such proposals periodically since the end of the Cold War. There is broad agreement that a comprehensive regional structure must include key regional actors, such as Iran and Iraq, to be effective and legitimate. But these proposals generally exclude such countries as Afghanistan and Pakistan; there is little interest among traditional Middle East states to expand regional definitions to include these countries.[11]

A cooperative, multilateral regional system would encourage dialogue and political and military confidence-building among its members. In fact, such broad dialogues are already taking place at the unofficial level with dozens of "track-two" workshops convening in both Europe and the Middle East on a regular basis. Track-two dialogues are unofficial policy discussions—often about regional security issues—among participants who have some form of access to official policymaking circles.[12] Although some of these dialogues receive gov-

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[11] Most experts and officials with whom the authors met during a December 2005 trip to the region also defined the region in this way, and explicitly opposed including Pakistan and Afghanistan in regional discussions. These countries are considered on the periphery of the region and are associated with the American "Greater Middle East" concept, a concept that has not generated wide regional support and evokes perceptions of a U.S. design to impose democracy on the region.

[12] On track-two dialogues, see Dalia Dassa Kaye, *Talking to the Enemy: Track Two Regional Security Dialogues in the Middle East and South Asia,* Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND

ernmental funding, many are sponsored by nongovernmental organizations or academic and other nonprofit institutions. In the Middle East, participants from throughout the region attend (Arabs, Iranians, and Israelis), in addition to Americans and other extraregional actors (often Europeans or Canadians). In many of these dialogues, participants discuss ideas about forming new multilateral security structures to address a broad range of regional challenges.[13] A cooperative multilateral structure would not be based on a specific, common threat, but rather would provide an open-ended security forum where a range of regional challenges could be discussed and addressed (e.g., narcotics trafficking, responses to natural disasters, economic and energy development).

A major strength of a broad regional structure is that it can address overlapping security issues in a region that cannot be discussed if particular actors or issues are excluded. For example, Gulf states are hesitant to discuss the nuclear issue without also addressing Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Likewise, it would be difficult for Israel to address the nuclear issue with its immediate neighbors without the inclusion of such states like Iran. A broad regional structure could make such discussions possible. A comprehensive security structure could also assume a broad definition of security, addressing regional challenges such as economic, political and social development. Various groups of issues (such as humanitarian and disaster relief and cross-border trade and security) could provide the flexibility to bring in relevant regional and extraregional actors (such as Afghanistan and Pakistan) at the appropriate time, providing a more inclusive framework. Indeed, the Doha II conference hosted by Qatar in February 2006 (with the support of Germany and the UN) focused on border man-

Corporation, MG-592-NSRD, 2007. Also see Dalia Dassa Kaye, *Rethinking Track Two Diplomacy: The Middle East and South Asia,* The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations, Clingendael Diplomacy Papers No. 3, June 2005; and Dalia Dassa Kaye, "Track Two Diplomacy and Regional Security in the Middle East," *International Negotiation,* Vol. 6, No. 1, 2001b, pp. 49–77.

[13] More-ambitious proposals call for the adoption of a rule-based system with universal principles. See, for example, Michael Kraig, "Assessing Alternative Security Frameworks for the Persian Gulf," *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 11, No. 3, Fall 2004, pp. 139–156.

agement between Afghanistan and its neighbors and the improvement of cross-border police cooperation. Broad multilateral frameworks focusing on such issues would also help bring Iraq into a cooperative regional security system if its domestic situation stabilizes.

However, a multilateral cooperative regional structure would face a number of serious challenges. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict could dominate the discourse and politicize the process to a point where progress on any other issue would become difficult. Arab nations, such as Egypt and Jordan, insist that they have "no stomach" for multilateral security cooperation with Israel before the resolution of the Palestinian issue, or at least before there appears to be a "light at the end of the tunnel."[14] Israel's nuclear position is another issue that could dominate discussion and ultimately undermine the process, as occurred in the multilateral arms control efforts in the early 1990s known as the Arms Control and Regional Security Working Group (ACRS).[15]

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[14] Author meetings in Amman and Cairo, December 2005.

[15] On ACRS, see Bruce W. Jentleson and Dalia Dassa Kaye, "Security Status: Explaining Regional Security Cooperation and Its Limits in the Middle East," *Security Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 1998, pp. 204–38; Dalia Dassa Kaye, "Regional Security Cooperation," Chapter 4, in *Beyond The Handshake: Multilateral Cooperation in the Arab-Israeli Peace Process*, 1991–1996, New York: Columbia University Press, 2001a, pp. 76–109; Peter Jones, "Open Forum: Arms Control in the Middle East: Is It Time To Renew ACRS?" United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, *Disarmament Forum—North-East Asian Security*, No. 2, 2005b; U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, "Middle East Peace Process Arms Control and Regional Security Working Group," fact sheet, July 21, 2001; Nabil Fahmy, "Special Comment," United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, *Disarmament Forum*, No. 2, 2001, pp. 3–5; Shai Feldman, *Nuclear Weapons and Arms Control in the Middle East*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997; David Griffiths, *Maritime Aspects of Arms Control and Security Improvement in the Middle East*, San Diego, Calif.: Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation, IGCC Policy Paper No. 56, 2000; Peter Jones, "Arms Control in the Middle East: Some Reflections on ACRS," *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 28, No. 1, 1997; Peter Jones, "Negotiating Regional Security in the Middle East: The ACRS Experience and Beyond," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 3, 2003; Emily Landau, "Egypt and Israel in ACRS: Bilateral Concerns in a Regional Arms Control Process," Tel Aviv: Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, Memorandum No. 59, 2001; and Michael Yaffe, "An Overview of the Middle East Peace Process Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security," in Fred Tanner, ed., *Confidence-Building and Security Co-operation in the Mediterranean, North Africa and the Middle East*, Malta: University of Malta, 1994.

The extraregional involvement that would be necessary to create such a framework would also create a legitimacy problem, particularly if the resulting institution is viewed as serving Western rather than regional interests. Many actors in the region question the American commitment to cooperative postures, and some perceive the United States as more interested in self-serving bilateral competitive military arrangements than in the creation of cooperative multilateral security structures.[16] Inter-Arab and Arab-Iranian rivalries are also likely to surface in a broad forum, with some members continuing to view each other as threats, rivals, or adversaries in ongoing territorial disputes. And the widespread regional resistance to cooperative multilateral frameworks will take time to overcome.[17]

Given this context, it is not surprising that previous experiments in forging multilateral regional security frameworks in the Middle East have largely failed.[18] Previous failures do not guarantee the futility of future efforts, but they do suggest that participants must exercise a degree of caution when pursuing multilateral options. Still, the most opportune times to pursue new regional security arrangements tend to follow major armed conflicts, when regional relations are in flux. The intensity of current interest in regional security structures, particularly in the Gulf, suggests some demand in the region for new thinking on the subject.

A Gulf Regional Security Option. Gulf analysts and officials have been particularly active in thinking about new subregional security structures, largely because of the difficulties in creating the compre-

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[16] See Middle East Policy Council, "Conference Report," *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 11, No. 3, Fall 2004.

[17] The authors' meetings with government officials and security experts in Jordan, Egypt and Israel during a December 2005 trip supports this point. There is still great skepticism about the value and feasibility of regional security cooperation, with most still preferring unilateral or bilateral strategies to protect national security interests.

[18] For a description and explanation of the failures and weaknesses of previous Arab regional security arrangements (the Arab League, Central Treaty Organization/Baghdad Pact, the Gulf Cooperation Council, and the Arab Cooperation Council), see Joseph A. Kechichian, *Security Efforts in the Arab World: A Brief Examination of Four Regional Organizations*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, N-3570-USDP, 1994.

hensive regional structure described above.[19] A workshop in Dubai in 2004 sponsored by the Institute for Near East and Gulf Military Analysis (INEGMA) and the Stanley Foundation focused specifically on the question of alternative security frameworks for Gulf security and led to a variety of papers from regional participants.[20] This group met again to discuss these issues in Oman in June 2006. The Gulf Research Center also sponsors research and analysis on multilateral security structures, particularly on the specific proposal to create a Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone (WMDFZ) in the Gulf.[21]

One idea being floated in track-two circles is the creation of a new Gulf security framework (perhaps modeled on the less institutionalized ARF) that includes Iran and Iraq—essentially a "GCC+2"—with the possible inclusion of Yemen. Such a Gulf framework could mitigate the potential threat of Iranian power by bringing it into the regional fold and could provide a security umbrella for Iraq if its internal situation stabilizes. It could also serve as a forum for discussing instability in Iraq, particularly if the country breaks into three entities as a consequence of civil war. Outside the Arab-Israeli conflict, the major wars of the region have been fought in the Gulf, so there is a strong logic to focusing on this subregion first as the basis for a more enduring regional security framework. Those who favor this option also believe that this is the only politically feasible framework. Gulf research analysts believe there is little support for a multilateral security framework that includes the Levant because the Arab Gulf states would not want the Israeli-Palestinian question to dominate.[22] But a subre-

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[19] For a comprehensive argument favoring a subregional approach, see Michael D. Yaffe, "The Gulf and a New Middle East Security System," *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XI, No. 3, Fall 2004, pp. 118–130. For another argument in favor of a Gulf security system following an ARF model, see Joseph McMillan, Richard Sokolsky, and Andrew C. Winner, "Toward a New Regional Security Architecture," *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 3, Summer 2003, pp. 161–175.

[20] Many of the papers from the workshop were published in "Special Issue: Alternative Strategies for Gulf Security," *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 11, No. 3, Fall 2004.

[21] See, for example, Peter Jones, *A Gulf WMD Free Zone Within a Broader Gulf and Middle East Security Architecture*, Dubai, United Arab Emirates: Gulf Research Center, 2005a.

[22] Author interview with military analyst based in Dubai, October 2005.

gional option is no panacea, and it may prove no easier to create than a broader regional structure. The current Iranian leadership has shown little interest in regional cooperation,[23] particularly because Arab Gulf neighbors desire to rein in Iranian power and capabilities—a desire that will likely grow if Iran develops nuclear weapons. A nuclear-armed Iran may be more interested in developing security relationships with Russia and China than with its neighbors. Moreover, regional organizations, such as the GCC—the foundation on which a new Gulf structure would be based—are weak and dependent on Western military power. Iraqis at track-two meetings have suggested that Iraq is not interested in the GCC and would not be willing to join unless Iran were also included.[24] It is also questionable whether the small GCC states would want to invite Iraq to join given that the institution was originally designed to balance both Iraq and Iran and was based on the common interests of small Gulf monarchies. Growing concerns about rising Shi'a influence in Iraq and across the region will only reinforce such positions among Sunni-governed states in the Gulf.

Another shortcoming of the Gulf option is that, given the nature of security dilemmas in the area, it is difficult to devise a subregional system without touching on broader regional issues. For example, the Saudi foreign minister has noted that Iran is not likely to give up its nuclear ambitions without a regional system in place that also addresses Israel and the U.S. presence in the area.[25]

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[23] However, discussion of new regional security arrangements is widespread in Iran. See the recent ten-point proposal for a Persian Gulf Security Cooperation Council by the former Secretary of the Supreme Council for National Security, Hassan Rowhani, for Iranian views on multilateral security cooperation, Kaveh L. Afrasiabi, "Iran Unveils a Persian Gulf Security Plan," *Asia Times*, April 14 2007. For other Iranian views, see Afrasiabi and Maleki, pp. 263–264; Center for Strategic Research, Foreign Policy Research Division, Expediency Council, "Negarinaye keshvarhaye Arabi nesbat be Iran dar fazaye Jadide Mantaghei" [Arab countries' concerns about Iran in the light of the new environment in the region], 2006; and Mahmoud Dehghani, "Naghsh-e Aragh-e Jadid dar tartibat-e amniyati-e mantaghe-e Khalij-e Fars" [The role of the new Iraq in the security orders in the Persian Gulf], Center for Strategic Research, Foreign Policy Research Division, Expediency Council, 2003. The authors thank Sara Hajiamiri for this translation and analysis.

[24] See Middle East Policy Council, 2004.

[25] Cited in Jones, 2005a.

A Layered Regional Security Framework

A single-level approach to regional security has not worked in the past and is unlikely to work in the future. Instead, a layered regional security framework emphasizing cooperative bilateral and multilateral relationships over time may be the most appropriate means of ensuring long-term stability. This approach would allow the United States to bolster bilateral security ties with key regional allies primarily through cooperative security activities (what might be termed "soft" issues, such as border security, civil-military relations, peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and consequence management), while at the same time offering a more cooperative and inclusive regional context. It would also demonstrate a willingness to leave the door open to Iranian participation on a variety of security challenges in a broad regional forum.

A cooperative multilateral regional structure will not be formed without appropriate political conditions. In particular, a sense that the Israeli-Palestinian peace process is moving forward and that the United States is making an effort to resolve the issue would seem necessary, although the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict is by no means sufficient to address all outstanding regional security challenges. Extra-regional actors will also need to be cautious about the appearance of imposing a Western security structure on the region. Local leadership with extra-regional support would improve the prospects of sustaining and expanding such a cooperative structure.

As a consequence, fostering regional support and initiative for a cooperative security framework is critical. Focusing on "soft" areas for security cooperation can also deepen confidence in the value of multilateral cooperation and encourage cross-border collaboration on critical issues of mutual concern (e.g., natural disasters, narcotics trafficking, energy and environmental issues).[26] The future success of a broader cooperative security structure will depend on regional actors viewing

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[26] As pointed out by one of the reviewers, some areas of potential cooperation would not serve well as starting points for inclusive, regional cooperation. For example, while there is common interest in countering certain terrorist groups (such as al-Qaeda), much "terrorism" in the region is in fact by groups that have some ties to regional states that use it as extensions of their foreign policy. Thus, cooperating on counterterrorism is not a bland, apolitical task

such cooperation as in their own interests and not as a favor to the United States or other external actors. Undoubtedly this will be challenging because realpolitik and balance of power calculations continue to dominate thinking in the region and would serve to undermine attempts to establish and sustain cooperative regimes. But the effort should be made. Indeed, increased regional interest in addressing the Iraq problem—beginning with the two-day meeting of Iraq's neighbors and other parties in Sharm el-Sheikh in early May 2007—demonstrates that states can find common ground for cooperation even when zero-sum logic is still dominant.[27] Recent U.S.-Iranian talks over Iraq emanating from the Sharm conference after nearly 30 years of intense animosity between Washington and Tehran demonstrate this point. Although a cooperative security structure in the Middle East would take time, such a regional context would best buttress stability and U.S. bilateral security relationships in the region over the long term, including those that might develop with Iraq and Afghanistan.

Bilateral U.S. Security Relationships with Iraq and Afghanistan

Different regional security arrangements and trends will likely influence the nature of U.S. bilateral ties with Iraq and Afghanistan, but the nature of such ties will also depend a great deal upon the political trajectories and orientations of the two countries. Moreover, the character of future regimes—including their sectarian composition, nationalist tendencies, and legitimacy in the eyes of the population—will impose certain constraints on bilateral security relationships. In this section, we consider a range of options for U.S. bilateral security ties with Iraq

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like cooperating on natural disasters. Counterproliferation is another problematic area to include in the early stages of a broad-based regional cooperation regime.

[27] The United States is also attempting to broaden international contributions to stability in Iraq, including greater U.N. involvement. See Colum Lynch and Robin Wright, "U.S. Seeks U.N. Help with Talks on Iraq," *Washington Post*, August 10, 2007, p. 1.

and Afghanistan over time and examine whether they would be suited to the potential political and security outcomes in each country.

The following menu of security relationships comprises a number of analytic constructs derived from empirical observations regarding the nature of existing U.S. security ties with other states today. Some of the concepts, such as defense pacts or strategic partnerships, are well-known terms in security studies. Others, such as what we term "situational partnerships" and "minimal security ties," were developed by RAND researchers to identify a range of activities not captured by other models. But, like any construct, actual security ties will vary in content within each type, and relationships may shift quickly over time. Moreover, in some cases one could envision applying two models to a relationship simultaneously.[28] For these reasons, we have chosen to look at security relationship options as a continuum, to demonstrate the range of possibilities the United States might pursue with Iraq and Afghanistan.

Formal Defense Pacts

A defense pact would offer a formal commitment to lend direct military assistance to Iraq or Afghanistan if either country is attacked by an external actor. It would also include all the trappings of broad alliance obligations—such as those the United States has with NATO, Japan, and South Korea. There are no current examples of such a formal bilateral defense arrangement between the United States and a nation in the Middle East or Central or South Asia.[29] Indeed, in today's

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[28] For example, the United States has both a deep strategic partnership with the United Kingdom and a formal defense pact through NATO.

[29] Although the United States does not maintain formal pacts in these regions, there are examples of some formal defense agreements that contribute to regional deterrence. For example, the United States signed a ten-year defense agreement with Kuwait following the Iraqi invasion in August 1991. It provided for a stockpile of U.S. military equipment in that country, the use of Kuwait ports by U.S. troops, and joint training exercises. There have also been historical attempts to create formal defense alliances on a multilateral basis, such as the Baghdad Pact, but such efforts failed because of internal instability and sensitivity among Middle Eastern partners to overt defense agreements with the West. If definitions of the Middle East include Turkey, then of course the United States has a multilateral defense pact with that country through NATO.

international environment, with major security threats often stemming from internal rather than external sources, the relevance of defense pacts may be declining.[30] Given the strong anti-American sentiment throughout the regions (Afghans, with their more positive view of the United States, are an exception for the time being), formal defense pacts and treaties are an unlikely option for either Iraq or Afghanistan absent a major existential and overt threat emanating from outside their borders. Although views of what constitutes a significant external threat may vary depending on the nature of the political leadership, even strongly pro-Western regimes in Iraq or Afghanistan may consider the domestic costs of a defense pact with the United States to be too high. Cooperative leaderships in Baghdad and Kabul may prefer less formal and more-flexible security arrangements—as may the United States. Regimes less compatible with U.S. interests (e.g., authoritarian or multi-vectoral-minded governments) would more likely reject such a substantial security relationship with the United States.

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[30] However, there has been periodic discussion over the years about formalizing Jerusalem's defense relationship with Washington (Israel has resisted a formal defense treaty with the United States in order to maintain its autonomy, favoring instead a series of more-informal defense memoranda and agreements addressing military, industrial, and intelligence issues). The elevated threat perception in Israel created by the prospects of a nuclear-armed Iran are once again generating debate in Israel about the value of more-formal arrangements with the United States, including discussions about upgrading Israel's relationship with NATO. Some analysts believe that a nuclear-armed Iran would lead Israel to seek a formal defense pact with the United States (author conversation with American professor specializing in U.S.-Israeli relations, March 2006). On the question of a defense pact with the United States, see Alex Fishman "A Moment Before the Iranian Bomb," FBIS GMP20041210000096, *Yedi'ot Aharanot* (Leshabat Supplement), in Hebrew, December 10, 2004, pp. 14–15. On growing Israeli interest in NATO, see Address by Oded Eran at the 5th Herzliyya Conference on "Upgrading Relations with NATO," FBIS GMP20041215000241, Herzliyya Institute of Policy and Strategy WWW-Audio, in Hebrew, December 15, 2004; Address by Eran Lerman at the 5th Herzliyya Conference on "Re-Energizing U.S.-Israeli Special Relations," FBIS GMP20041223000223, Herzliyya Institute of Policy and Strategy, WWW-Text, in Hebrew, December 15, 2004; Ron Prossor, "Israel's Atlantic Dimension," FBIS GMP20050224000135, Jerusalem, *Jerusalem Post* (Internet Version-WWW), in English, February 24, 2005; and Ronald D. Asmus, "Contain Iran: Admit Israel to NATO," *Washington Post*, February 21, 2006, p. A15.

Strategic Partnerships

The breadth and depth of strategic partnerships may vary from country to country, but the central premise of such a relationship is that it advances mutual security interests on a *wide range of issues* on an *enduring basis*. Strategic partnerships are less formal than defense pacts, but they include regular and in some cases visible security cooperation, such as bilateral and multilateral exercises and other capability-building training assistance. These partnerships assume friendly regimes where the focus is less on protecting territory from external attack than on cooperating to address a range of overlapping security interests— although U.S. commitments to lend direct military aid if attacked would not be out of the question in certain cases. A strategic partnership with Iraq and a continuing partnership with Afghanistan would clearly place both in the U.S. camp, although the Afghans currently believe their strategic partnership with the United States is inadequate, both in terms of resources as well as political commitment.[31] A strategic partnership would also better lock in the U.S. commitment to maintain internal security and a significant force presence during what are likely to be long transition periods in both countries. From the U.S. perspective, such partnerships could further a range of security interests in the region—in particular, counterterrorism, counterproliferation, and counternarcotics efforts.

Nevertheless, the strategic partnership model has drawbacks. If the relationship is pursued too visibly (e.g., through high-profile bilateral or multilateral training exercises or major arms deals that appear to expand beyond legitimate defense needs), it could create opposition among nationalist or anti-American domestic groups and insecurity among regional neighbors, leading to a security dilemma and potentially a counter-alliance. This is particularly true in the case of Iraq, where a Shi'a-dominated state with credible power projection capabilities would provoke alarm in Riyadh, Amman, and Cairo—and possibly even Tehran. Saudi Arabia's reaction is of special long-term concern. In arguing in part why Riyadh would not pursue a nuclear weapon, Gawdat Bahgat has pointed to Iraq's current lack of a credible

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[31] Author discussions with officials and analysts in Afghanistan, November 2005.

offensive capability. Should this change, especially if a Shi'a-dominated Iraq acquires a capable air force under U.S. auspices, Riyadh would have greater incentives to pursue a countervailing deterrent.[32] While this may represent an extreme scenario, a strategic partnership with a unified, militarily capable Iraq would undoubtedly require greater diplomatic efforts on the part of the United States to assuage the concerns of its traditional allies.

Conversely, if the bilateral security relationship were kept too low-profile, the arrangement may be viewed as weak, creating the perception of a security vacuum among neighbors and/or internal challengers. Another potentially serious problem is that such a relationship would commit the United States to building up the central security institutions of its partner, a risk in states like Iraq where some of these institutions are run by sectarian forces with links to independent militias. If either Iraq or Afghanistan collapses, advanced American weaponry and technology might fall into the hands of adversaries. This is not a new problem (recall, for example, American security assistance to Iran before the fall of the Shah or to the mujahedeen in Afghanistan before the Soviet withdrawal), but it is certainly one to consider when weighing partnering options with states that face particularly uncertain futures.

One way to circumvent this dilemma is by redefining America's strategic commitment to Iraq and Afghanistan in broader, nonlethal terms—relying more on infrastructure development, education, investment, and other measures. These measures would have great symbolic value in certain quarters, but they may be insufficient to satisfy powerful domestic constituents, such as the officer corps, and would send an ambiguous signal to regional neighbors contemplating intervention.

A further disadvantage for some future Iraqi or Afghan governments would be the greater conditionality attached to U.S. cooperation (based on political, economic, and human rights criteria) than might be the case with other potential strategic partners (e.g., Russia, China,

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[32] Gawdat Bahgat, "Nuclear Proliferation: The Case of Saudi Arabia," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 60, No. 3, Summer 2006, p. 443.

or even Iran).[33] Depending on the political disposition of their governments, Iraq and Afghanistan may not want to limit their options and increase their domestic vulnerability by placing their countries squarely on the American side. In Iraq, where some Iraqi Shi'a parties have made a concerted effort to straddle the line between supporting their long-time patron Iran and cultivating good relations with the United States, this disadvantage is especially apparent.[34] Conversely, the United States may not want a strategic partnership with countries that are moving in directions antithetical to key U.S. interests.

Situational Partnerships

A situational partnership provides flexibility to address a broad spectrum of security assistance requirements—from counterterrorism intelligence-sharing to maritime interdiction, or to such humanitarian projects as demining—without committing a country to an enduring or broader security relationship with the United States. This option provides a foundation for security relations with countries whose posture toward U.S. interests may be neutral, supportive, competitive, or even hostile. Thus, such a partnership would be flexible enough to accommodate relationships with states (or even substate actors) almost anywhere in the compatibility-security domain in Figure 1.2. It would allow the United States to collaborate with the governments of Afghanistan and Iraq on specific, limited objectives of mutual interest.

The situational partner alternative would be appropriate in cases where the political evolution of Iraq or Afghanistan necessitated a more discreet, less formal relationship with the United States. Strong nationalist proclivities among the regime leadership or popular sentiment that is explicitly opposed to ties with the United States or a large U.S. presence could require ad hoc cooperation on a limited scale.

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[33] The next section considers some of the conditional aspects of U.S. defense assistance and security cooperation with regional allies.

[34] During recent interviews with officials in GCC countries, the authors found that those countries' proximity to Iran was a major factor in their ambivalence about wholeheartedly endorsing U.S. efforts on the nuclear issue. "We have to live next to Iran; you don't," a senior Omani official told us. Similar reservations and the need to "keep all channel opens" could inform future Iraqi views about a strategic partnership.

Similarly, the rise to power of authoritarian secular or Islamist-dominated regimes whose internal practices are antithetical to U.S. goals of political reform and human rights would make a situation-dependent approach a more nuanced, attractive option than a strategic partnership, which could lend the appearance of a blanket U.S. endorsement.

The situational partner model with Kabul and Baghdad would provide an opportunity for the United States to acknowledge and constructively shape Iran's influence in Afghan and Iraqi affairs. Certain security functions—limited training on border control, demining, and antipiracy in the case of Iraq—could be devolved to Iran without jeopardizing long-term U.S. objectives or in any way ignoring America's serious concerns with other aspects of Iranian behavior. Although such a policy risks emboldening Tehran's nationalist leadership or could be perceived as appeasement, Iranian influence is already a fait accompli, especially in Iraq, and it is likely to remain so for the foreseeable future, especially if U.S.-Iranian talks over Iraq bear fruit. The situational partner model may be the most effective option for managing this reality with regard to Baghdad. It would be inappropriate and even counterproductive to view either Iraq or Afghanistan as future "bulwarks" or "pillars" against Iran—or to use their relationships with Tehran as a yardstick for determining levels of U.S. support.

In the current context of the war on terrorism, situational partnerships—particularly regarding intelligence-sharing—have been established with a number of countries, such as Syria or Libya, whose regional outlook or regime character would not otherwise warrant broader agreements. The Sultanate of Oman is an illustrative case of situational cooperation with a regime that is friendly toward the United States, stable, and relatively tolerant, but that wishes to preserve its independence from U.S. policies and keep its bilateral security ties somewhat circumscribed.[35] For its part, the United States does not perceive Oman as a critical pivot for its regional security strategy, so there is less desire to invest heavily in a broader bilateral security structure. Based on these mutually agreed-upon parameters, the United States cooperates with Oman on a relatively narrow range of military objec-

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[35] Author interview with senior Omani defense official, February 2006.

tives related to such areas as reconnaissance flights, maritime interdiction, and search and rescue.

Other limited kinds of security cooperation activities that might apply in this type of relationship could include defense and military contacts, limited professional military education such as the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program, and possibly subject-matter expert exchanges on topics of mutual interest. The cultivation of low-level security ties in such areas would provide opportunities to engage and influence a country without offending nationalist sensitivities or signaling a blanket U.S. endorsement of a regime's policies on other issues. Should the United States later seek to expand relations into a more robust or formal security arrangement, it will have established a foundation of military-to-military ties and protocols to accomplish this. Under this rubric, the United States could also capitalize on a country's specific and, in some cases, unique niche capabilities—e.g., demining, sharing human intelligence (HUMINT)—without necessitating a wider U.S. commitment to improve that country's military capabilities.[36] Finally, by limiting the scope and terms of its cooperation, as well as its actual military presence, the United States can use a situational partnership to help avoid furthering the perception by neighboring powers—particularly those with aspirations for regional preeminence, such as Russia or Iran—that the United States is encroaching on their "backyard." As a corollary, this approach may leave certain security functions unfulfilled by the United States, possibly encouraging burden-sharing and a more multilateral approach by other regional actors or outside powers.

Despite the advantages a situational partnership might offer, however, such a relationship would present a unique set of concerns in the case of Afghanistan. Here, the Karzai government has already criticized the United States for what Kabul perceives as its position on the "back burner" of U.S. policy priorities in comparison with Iraq. A situational partnership would represent a clear and unambiguous step down from

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[36] Jennifer Moroney, Adam Grissom, and Jefferson P. Marquis, *A Capabilities-Based Strategy for Army Security Cooperation,* Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-563-A, 2007.

previous commitments, and it might weaken the central government in Kabul and compel it to turn to other patrons. For these reasons, the United States may prefer a strategic rather than situational partnership with Afghanistan, as discussed further below.

Minimal or No Security Ties

The last option to consider is one in which the United States has no security ties with the country or keeps its ties to an absolute minimum—such as the presence of a defense attaché at the U.S. embassy (assuming that diplomatic relations exist) who limits activities to simple representational functions. This alternative might be appropriate in cases where the regime is explicitly hostile to the United States or where the state has completely failed and lacks any semblance of a central government. Recent examples include Iran and Afghanistan under the Taliban.

The absence of security ties with a given country would likely increase U.S. interest in pursuing avenues for maintaining security relations and some low-level security cooperation with neighbors in the region that are friendlier to U.S. interests. In the case of Iraq, the United States has good relations with a number of neighboring states that could serve as viable security partners or whose territory could be used to posture U.S. forces against a hostile regime in Baghdad. In Afghanistan, state failure or a hostile regime in Kabul would likely push the United States to rely more heavily on basing privileges and intelligence-sharing in Pakistan and the Central Asian states.

In addition, the United States could constructively shape the regional security environment through "negative security assurances." Under this framework, the United States would offer certain assurances not to undertake punitive measures against a hostile regime (e.g., extending sanctions, promoting regime change, or funding opposition groups) in return for certain policy commitments, (e.g., no pursuit of WMD, no support for terrorists). Of course, to be effective, negative security assurances require a central government that can honor and enforce its commitments.

Preferred U.S. Bilateral Security Ties with Iraq and Afghanistan

What types of bilateral security relationships might the United States seek with Iraq and Afghanistan over the long term? Given the uncertainty of the political orientations and security outcomes of the two nations, the United States must be prepared to pursue a variety of options. Our previous discussion of the nature of the threats facing Afghanistan and Iraq, our analysis of the benefits and drawbacks to each security cooperation model, and the current regime trajectories in Kabul and Baghdad suggest that *the United States should seek a deepened strategic partnership with Kabul and should explore the possibility of a strong situational partnership with Baghdad*. These are likely the most optimistic relationships the United States could forge with Iraq and Afghanistan over the long term and the most likely to provide the leverage to nudge them toward secure outcomes that are compatible with U.S. interests. Strengthening the strategic partnership with Afghanistan and building a situational partnership with Iraq would best address a range of U.S. security interests in the region and preserve sufficient flexibility to enhance or decrease levels of cooperation depending on political circumstances. It is also possible to pursue these partnerships in ways that are sensitive to the regional and domestic environments; in fact, the partnerships should openly specify the intention of the U.S. presence in the two countries and the overall U.S. strategy in the surrounding regions. These models of partnership with Iraq and Afghanistan could also facilitate U.S. efforts to build more-enduring regional multilateral security structures to address long-term challenges.

While these models are not without their drawbacks, other security relationship options may be even more vulnerable and limited. Domestic critics within each country (particularly Iraq), as well as regional powers such as Russia or Iran, are likely to view formal defense pacts with hostility. A minimal security relationship would signal a failure to establish stable and unitary states in Iraq and Afghanistan that are willing to work with the United States in even limited areas. In the case of Iraq, a strategic partnership would run contrary to the current trajectory of the state and the ascendancy of Shi'a parties that seek good relations with Tehran. These elements, for both nationalist and sectarian

reasons, are likely to view a strategic partnership as closing off channels with Iran and antagonizing an important neighbor and patron. While a situational partnership model might still be discomforting to Iran, it more fully acknowledges current realities and provides more openings for managing Iranian influence. The situational partner model also gives the United States more options for establishing ties with a decentralized Iraqi state in which certain functions and capabilities may be spread across a range of sectarian-based security institutions and paramilitaries. And it is flexible enough to help shape and respond to varied outcomes in Iraq, including fragmentation, where the United States may want to cooperate with certain regions (such as Iraqi Kurdistan) or other subnational actors (such as tribes).

As noted previously, the more broad-ranging strategic partnership is appropriate for Afghanistan, both from the Afghan and U.S. points of view. A continued strategic partnership between Kabul and Washington would help ensure continued U.S. and international support for Afghanistan in the political, military, economic, and law enforcement spheres. It would also help promote a U.S. presence in a region where terrorist safe havens, nuclear weapons, and smuggling threaten regional stability and other U.S. interests. The United States is a major source of development aid; moreover, Afghan public opinion polls suggest a positive view of the United States and its objectives. A strategic partnership would send a strong signal to both domestic and regional audiences that the United States is committed to Afghanistan's future stability and would secure Afghan confidence in the long-term relationship. Anything less than a strategic partnership would be perceived by officials in Kabul as a lapse in earlier U.S. commitments and might be viewed by neighboring states as an invitation to intervene. In fact, a stronger partnership should be part of a strategy to accord a higher policy and resource priority to Afghanistan. This deepened partnership should detail the roles of U.S. and Afghan forces over time and identify the associated resources that would be required to sustain the partnership. Moreover, it should state that foreign forces in Afghanistan will not be used against other states unless Afghanistan is under the threat of attack and requests military aid. A clear outline of a strategic partnership with the United States would address potential fears among

regional neighbors by underscoring the cooperative nature of the relationship and by committing both nations to the peaceful resolution of issues that create friction with bordering states, including Pakistan. In the event of a failure in Afghanistan leading to authoritarian (e.g., Taliban) rule or disintegration of the state, the United States would need to redraw its relations with the government or substate actors. Here, low-level situational partnerships or minimal security ties along with closer cooperation with other regional actors would be most appropriate.

Building Future Security Cooperation with Iraq and Afghanistan

What kinds of security cooperation might support a strategic partnership with Kabul and a situational partnership with Baghdad over the long term? How might the United States manage its security cooperation activities to shape or respond to political and security outcomes? In the best-case scenario, both countries' intent and capacity to become cooperative and secure—i.e., to move toward the upper right quadrant of Figure 1.2—would bode well for sustained partnerships with the United States. A stable and secure environment in these countries would also generate further interest and willingness on the part of the USG, the DoD, and the USAF to engage in a wide range of security cooperation activities. However, less-favorable political and security outcomes in either country would lead the United States to scale back its security cooperation activities, with fewer options to draw upon to move a failed or less-cooperative state toward greater compatibility with U.S. interests. It is critical to determine the range and mix of security cooperation tools that the DoD, and ultimately the USAF, could employ to encourage favorable trajectories, discourage state failure or emergence of dangerous regimes, and respond to a wide range of outcomes in either Afghanistan or Iraq.

Shaping Partners Through Security Cooperation

Security cooperation can be either reactive or proactive. Given that long-term political and security outcomes in Iraq and Afghanistan are

uncertain, it makes sense to present security cooperation activities as a menu of options that may differ depending on the conditions that arise. But security cooperation can and should be proactive to encourage a partner country to move toward more-favorable outcomes—the traditional "shaping" role of security cooperation. If we think of "willingness to pursue policies compatible with U.S. interests" as the key variable, a cooperative partner is by definition willing to work with the United States in a variety of ways, in part to further the bilateral relationship. In contrast, an uncooperative government is willing to consider a bilateral relationship with the United States only when absolutely necessary.

An important—if not the key—goal of all security cooperation is to positively affect the "willingness" factor. The DoD can help influence a partner's willingness to pursue policies compatible with U.S. interests by focusing and sequencing its security cooperation activities to target areas of mutual interest. It should make equal, if not greater, effort to ensure that a cooperative partner remains cooperative—in other words, that it does not backslide. Creativity is required to ensure that certain high-impact activities are employed at the right time. Some activities may be more appropriate in the near term than in the far term and vice versa. As the relationship matures, security cooperation programs may focus on additional, more-complex activities with varying scope and intensity. The results of these activities should lead to increased partner capacity to secure its interests and to support those of the United States.

The DoD already has taken some important steps to put structures and processes into place for new security cooperation relationships with Afghanistan and Iraq. The Office of Security Cooperation in Afghanistan (OSC-A) coordinates all DoD security cooperation efforts in that country. This is a change from the normal structure of DoD in-country efforts, which usually focus only on a subset of overall U.S. security cooperation. Traditionally, the DoD supports an Office of Defense Cooperation or an Office of Military Cooperation, whose primary function is to coordinate Title 22 security assistance—for example, foreign military sales (FMS), foreign military financing (FMF), IMET, and grants for excess defense articles (EDA). In Iraq,

the Multinational Security Transition Command–Iraq (MNSTC-I) coordinates security cooperation activities.

To simplify the rather complicated world of USG security cooperation, we reviewed classified and unclassified State Department and DoD security cooperation strategies to distill the following major categories for the entire USG. Based on our analysis, the major DoD-related categories include the following:

- Education: professional military education for allies and partner countries at service schools and war colleges
- Training: technical or specialized training at U.S. facilities or in-country
- Exercises: bilateral or multilateral exercises that can be conducted in the United States or in-country
- Experimentation: events designed to test new concepts or advanced equipment
- Exchanges: sharing of staff officers at headquarters-level positions
- Defense and military contacts: discussions among subject-matter experts to share ideas; designed to build relationships
- Workshops, forums, and conferences: events lasting several days designed to gather and distribute information
- Assessments: evaluation of partner capabilities in preparation for follow-on efforts such as training or equipping
- Equipment: provision of U.S. equipment to a foreign partner
- International armaments cooperation: cooperation in weapons research and acquisition
- Research, development, test and evaluation (RDT&E): program-level efforts designed to develop advanced concepts and equipment
- Physical security: collective provision of training and equipment intended to safeguard existing infrastructure in a partner country
- Infrastructure assistance: provision of upgrades to existing facilities where they are deficient, or providing new infrastructure where none currently exists

- Other USG activities: programs and activities conducted by other USG agencies, including the State Department, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Justice.

The broader categories are useful as a construct to help U.S. planners think through how security cooperation can serve as a foundation of the bilateral relationship over time. In addition, the United States may provide active assistance to partner-nation forces in the context of their own ongoing combat or support operations. For example, U.S. assets might provide Iraqi or Afghan ground forces with niche capabilities, such as ISR, mobility, and close air support during their operations against insurgent and terrorist groups. We refer to this "operational assistance" in subsequent pages but treat it as separate from security cooperation, although security cooperation activities are often required to facilitate the interoperability needed to implement operational assistance.

As previously noted, a U.S. strategy for security cooperation with Iraq and Afghanistan must be flexible enough to accommodate a variety of possible political and security trajectories in each country. Not all security cooperation or operational assistance activities are appropriate for each possible outcome in Iraq or Afghanistan, or for each associated bilateral security relationship with the United States. Figure 3.1 depicts the current level of effort in Iraq and Afghanistan associated with the 14 categories of security cooperation and assesses the general appropriateness of these activities for each of four political and security environments in Iraq and Afghanistan: (1) an Afghanistan that is tending toward compatibility and security and has a strategic partnership with the United States; (2) an Iraq that is tending toward compatibility and security and has a situational partnership with the United States; (3) an Iraq or Afghanistan that is tending toward authoritarianism or Islamic extremism (incompatible-secure); and (4) an Iraq or Afghanistan that is fragmenting and tending toward state failure (incompatible-insecure). Certain security cooperation activities are more appropriate than others depending on the trajectory or outcome in each country; even within each outcome, there are variations and exceptions to the rule based on specific situations. The squares on the first line represent

Figure 3.1
Current and Potential Security Cooperation Activities in Iraq and Afghanistan

Current activities
- ☐ High level of effort
- ▨ Moderate level of effort
- ■ Largely inappropriate

Potential activities
- ○ Appropriate (wide scope)
- ◐ Possibly appropriate (limited scope)
- ● Little or no effort

	Education	Training	Exercises	Experimentation	Exchanges	Defense and military contacts	Workshops and conferences	Assessments	Equipment	International arms cooperation	RDT&E	Physical security	Infrastructure assistance	Other USG activities
Current security cooperation with Kabul and Baghdad	▨	☐	■	■	☐	▨	▨	☐	☐	■	■	☐	☐	☐
Compatible-secure Afghanistan (strategic)	○	○	○	◐	○	○	○	○	○	●	●	○	○	○
Compatible-secure Iraq (situational)	○	◐	◐	●	●	○	○	◐	◐	●	●	◐	○	○
Incompatible-secure Afghanistan or Iraq	◐	◐	●	●	●	◐	◐	●	◐	●	●	●	●	◐
Incompatible-insecure (failed) Afghanistan or Iraq	◐	◐	●	●	●	◐	◐	◐	◐	●	●	◐	◐	◐

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the relative level of effort afforded current activities; the circles below them refer to the relative appropriateness of these activities under potential outcomes. White squares or circles denote a high level of effort or broadly appropriate activities; crosshatched squares or circles denote moderate level of effort or activities that may be appropriate, but with limited scope; and black squares or circles denote little or no effort or largely inappropriate activities. The following subsections detail these activities according to the political contexts in each country.

Current Security Cooperation Activities

At the time of this writing, the United States and its allies are engaged in substantial activities to build indigenous government security forces in Iraq and Afghanistan while thousands of U.S. and coalition troops fight insurgent, terrorist, and sectarian groups. U.S. defense-related sup-

port is resourced largely out of supplemental funds, IMET, FMF, and the Counter-Terrorism Fellowship Program (CTFP). As displayed in Figure 3.1, much of the security cooperation effort focuses on training and equipping the indigenous forces to eventually lead and then independently take over security functions. U.S. personnel are assigned to the interior and defense ministries to advise and assist in building those institutions and to conduct assessments of Iraqi and Afghan capabilities and needs to inform the force development plans of their security organs. Significant resources are going toward securing existing facilities, lines of communication, and other infrastructure and building new infrastructure. Iraqi and Afghan defense officials are beginning to participate in a growing number of bilateral and multilateral conferences and workshops. And the USG is expending considerable effort to expand economic capacity, develop democratic institutions and civil society, and reform other nonsecurity sectors of the indigenous governments. In addition, U.S. forces are providing operational assistance of various kinds, especially in the form of U.S. personnel "embedded" in Iraqi or Afghan ground units to provide advice and tactical support during field operations.

However, because of the dire need to get indigenous forces into the fight, security cooperation emphasizes expanding security forces rapidly rather than providing professional military education and arranging security-related workshops, conferences, and other events. At this relatively early point in the development of Iraqi and Afghan security forces and bilateral relations with the United States, it is inappropriate to conduct exercises, experimentation, international arms cooperation, or RDT&E. None of these activities is feasible in the presence of intense counterinsurgency operations to secure Iraq and Afghanistan. Moreover, because of their advanced and highly technical nature and the overall capacity required to absorb them, the latter three activities are largely proscribed for the foreseeable future. These are normally reserved for stable, close U.S. allies, such as the UK or Australia.

The different emphases accorded these activities should change as host-nation capacity improves or as political and security outcomes become more apparent. Moreover, the activities can be used proactively to help encourage outcomes favorable to U.S. interests and to discour-

age or prevent "devolution" from the U.S. perspective. Therefore, in response to local political and security trajectories and as part of the development of appropriate bilateral security relationships discussed earlier in this chapter, the USG should adjust security cooperation efforts in concert with its broader strategy toward Afghanistan, Iraq, and the regions surrounding them. The United States should link continued security cooperation with Iraq and Afghanistan to government behavior, the prevailing security situation, and progress in developing capable institutions. In this sense, security cooperation can be a tool for maintaining U.S. leverage during periods of transition as well as at an end state.

In the near term, the focus clearly remains on efforts to stabilize each country, extend the influence of their central governments, and bring the capacity of government security forces to a level that enables them to provide local security independently. Over time, if Iraq and Afghanistan set themselves on sustained, positive trajectories toward favorable outcomes, the United States will want to emphasize a shift toward national defense as well as the continued development of "soft power" so that the two countries can participate fully in cooperative multilateral structures in their regions. U.S. security cooperation efforts—while focused on counterinsurgency and internal security—are indeed sowing the seeds of these future capabilities today. For example, building the capacity of the local governments to extend services and humanitarian assistance to populations outside major urban areas and in isolated districts can later be used in cooperative humanitarian operations with other nations. Likewise, assistance that helps the governments defeat terrorist groups in undergoverned provinces can be useful in regional efforts to counter terrorism. In thinking about future security cooperation in support of bilateral partnerships, U.S. planners must take into account not only the goals for Iraq and Afghanistan, but also future regional strategies for the United States.

Security Cooperation with Afghanistan Under Alternative Outcomes
As part of a detailed, resourced strategic partnership with an Afghanistan whose political outlook favors U.S. interests and whose security situation improves (the "Compatible-secure Afghanistan" row in

Figure 3.1), the United States should be prepared to offer a wide range of security cooperation activities over the near, medium, and long terms. For example, the United States uses the IMET program to help instill professionalism and broaden the education of Afghan officers and enlisted personnel in English, basic technical academics, and professional military conduct under civilian leadership.[37] As the Afghan security forces begin mastering these topics and developing sustainable indigenous education programs in these areas, the educational emphasis might shift to more-advanced professional military education courses offered within the IMET program, or to the functionally oriented CTFP, depending on the goals set forth in the U.S. Security Cooperation Guidance and U.S. Central Command's (USCENTCOM's) Theater Security Cooperation Strategy for Afghanistan. Similarly, training of the Afghan National Army (ANA) focuses on such basics as individual combat skills and small-unit tactics and procedures. As unit capabilities improve, training may focus on more complex maneuver and employment of larger formations. Over the longer term, it might even be possible to conduct limited experimentation efforts with the Afghans. And, as Afghan forces increasingly take a lead role in counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, counternarcotics, and humanitarian operations, they should be able to draw upon U.S. niche capabilities such as ISR and mobility to enhance their effectiveness during these operations.

To support specific goals and end states in Afghanistan, the DoD could pursue

- bilateral exercises
- military training teams
- discussions with military, legal, academic, or scientific subject matter experts on a variety of topics
- workshops
- military-to-military talks focused on issues specific to Kabul

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[37] IMET funds for fiscal years 2005–2007 have been used to train junior-, mid-, and senior-level personnel in the ANA and the Afghan Air Corps in English, medical operations, communications, logistics, and engineering.

- needs and capabilities assessments
- provision of equipment needed to augment a deployable niche capability
- upgrades to basing infrastructure at existing foreign operating sites.

For its part, the USAF might leverage other DoD activities, such as the Air National Guard State Partnership Program. Moreover, the International Counter Proliferation Program within the Defense Threat Reduction Agency and the Proliferation Prevention Initiative Program could help provide support for improving Afghanistan's border security, including air sovereignty.

If the environment is conducive, multilateral exercises might be an additional option. Indeed, regional structures of the type described earlier in this chapter can serve as vehicles for multilateral education, training, and exercises with a cooperative Afghan government. For example, a recent Joint Staff/USCENTCOM multilateral exercise in Kyrgyzstan called REGIONAL COOPERATION 06 was aimed at facilitating cooperation on a host of security-related issues among the Central Asian states, Afghanistan, and Pakistan and involved several representatives of international organizations, including NATO.[38] Such exercises would serve a dual purpose: to encourage Afghanistan to maintain and improve its own security/military partnership with adjacent countries and, more importantly, to promote greater awareness by regional actors of common threats, such as international terrorism and illicit trafficking. Working multilaterally gives countries within a region a platform from which to recognize common problems and work toward common solutions. Afghanistan's recent membership in SAARC—which encourages member states to stay attuned to the threat of terrorism, including cross-border activity by regional terrorist networks—is an example of such multilateralism. Multilateral cooperation would have an important bearing on both the development

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[38] NATO was included to raise the awareness in the region that key multilateral organizations in Europe have a role to play in improving their security environment, particularly in the area of disaster preparedness.

of the strategic partnership and the types of assistance a cooperative and secure Afghanistan might request from the United States in the future.

Our assessment is that a stronger strategic partnership that accounts for Afghan and regional interests and is supported by wide-ranging security cooperation will help Kabul improve its security situation and encourage a cooperative political outlook. However, U.S. planners must prepare for less-favorable outcomes, such as a resurgent Taliban that wrests control of the government in Kabul (the "Incompatible-secure Afghanistan or Iraq" row in Figure 3.1) or a collapse of central authority (the "Incompatible-insecure (failed) Afghanistan or Iraq" row in Figure 3.1).

A Taliban government in Kabul, while a failure in terms of U.S. goals for Afghanistan, would not necessarily be immune to U.S. influence, and limited security cooperation under a narrowly scoped situational partnership may be advisable. This is particularly the case if the United States can convince the Taliban authority—through coercion or incentives—that repeating its "mistake" of providing a haven for al-Qaeda or similar groups in Afghanistan would run counter to its interests and even its prospects for survival. Moreover, U.S.-Taliban interests might coincide over the issue of illicit narcotics. The United States could be prepared to engage Taliban security forces in security cooperation activities that are very specific and limited to countering terrorism and narcotics trafficking; it may also be conceivable to encourage multilateral cooperation involving the Taliban on these issues. Absent even limited cooperation from the Taliban, though, the United States would seek to engage neighboring and other states, as well as domestic groups, in containing and destabilizing the Taliban government (e.g., using special operations forces to reconstitute a Northern Alliance).

Competition among warlords and their various state sponsors would likely accompany state failure in Afghanistan. In such a scenario, the central government could be either weak or nonexistent, and dispersed power centers would arise, along with large ungoverned areas hospitable to terrorist groups and criminal syndicates. U.S. interests may dictate that the USG establish or intensify security relationships with certain domestic groups in Afghanistan and with some surround-

ing states. A failed state scenario in Afghanistan may require regional, subregional, and international actors to band together to help alleviate human suffering and restore order and stability. This could involve a large, international peacekeeping or peace enforcement operation, as well as humanitarian assistance to refugees or isolated populations.

The level and variety of U.S. security assistance would depend greatly on the parties with which DoD is actually able to work— whether there is any central authority trying to restore stability (as in the case of a failing rather than a failed state) or whether power is diffuse and fragmented in a truly failed state. In the former, possibly appropriate activities might include very limited education, training, defense and military contacts, workshops or conferences, assessments, equipment, physical security, infrastructure assistance, and other USG assistance.[39] In the case of impending complete failure, U.S. assistance could go to providing narrowly scoped training, equipping, and other support to domestic groups whose outlooks are somewhat compatible with U.S. interests in such areas as sustaining populations, countering criminal and terrorist organizations, and protecting nongovernmental organizations in the regions the groups controlled. The DoD would also need to work closely with other USG agencies, such as USAID, to seek other ways of providing assistance to a failed Afghanistan.

Security Cooperation with Iraq Under Alternative Outcomes

The requirement to stem increasing violence and instability in Iraq's security environment should dictate a sustained, near-term emphasis on training, equipping, and advising the ISF and ensuring physical security above other forms of assistance. The need for trained, equipped, battle-ready Iraqi manpower outweighs longer-term, relationship-building assistance, such as conferences and discussions among subject matter experts. At the time of writing, however, and despite some lessened violence accompanying the "surge," it is difficult to envision a sus-

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[39] The nation of Georgia, which only five years ago was considered a failing state, provides an example of this scenario. Presently, the United States and particularly DoD has an extensive security cooperation relationship, from the Georgia Train and Equip (GTEP)/Security and Stability Operations (SSOP) program, to border security, legal, and economic assistance programs provided by other USG entities.

tained improvement in the security situation in Iraq—i.e., a movement toward the "compatible-secure" quadrant of Figure 1.2. Therefore, in addition to preparing for more-favorable Iraqi trajectories, the U.S. strategy for security cooperation in Iraq over the medium to long term must reflect an assessment of potential alternative avenues to shape and influence the environment under less-palatable outcomes.

In the best case, a representative government in Baghdad over time would gain greater control over the security situation and accommodate the major political and sectarian groupings in a unified Iraq (the "Compatible-secure Iraq" row of Figure 3.1). On the road toward this favorable outcome and, as part of the development of a longer-term, relatively strong U.S.-Iraqi situational partnership, U.S. security cooperation efforts should place greater emphasis on education and encouraging Iraqi participation in bilateral and multilateral conferences and other cooperative activities while continuing to build infrastructure, assess Iraqi needs, and improve physical security. As Iraqi capacity grows over the medium and long term, Iraq should have less need for infrastructure, assessment, and physical security support, and the United States can scale back the activities associated with these categories. Further along in the relationship, other peer-to-peer activities (e.g., defense and military contacts, combined exercises with specialized training) may become appropriate. The United States could develop plans to tailor existing programs to support these endeavors in the medium and long term.

Unlike Afghanistan, however, the local sensitivities about American presence in Iraq and regional considerations suggest that U.S. security cooperation efforts will have to be more narrowly focused under a bilateral situational partnership—even in the best case of a cooperative, secure Iraq. In the future, the United States will need to carefully calibrate its involvement in Iraq's defense establishment and its security needs; the need for caution applies as well to the types and levels of operational assistance offered to the ISF. Too visible a U.S. presence in Iraqi security institutions and at bases on Iraqi soil over the longer term could agitate local sensitivities and ultimately undermine the legitimacy of the central government in Baghdad. Moreover, provision of equipment and training that are easily interpreted as "offensive"

in nature (e.g., advanced air attack capabilities and excessive numbers of armored maneuver forces) could create tensions with neighbors that lead to an arms race or open conflict. Therefore, the United States should ensure that its security cooperation activities with a friendly, secure Iraq would be transparent to the people of Iraq as well as to other regional actors.

The United States could adjust plans for a situational partnership and associated security cooperation in the event a heavily Shi'a Islamist-dominated government were to arise in Baghdad. Such a government may exhibit traits of a multi-vectoral state whose policies waver between engagement with the West, on the one hand, and close cooperation with Iran and such extra-regional powers as China and Russia, on the other. An Iraq seeking intensified security cooperation activities—from basic military assistance to strong security partnerships—with a variety of actors would exemplify a government that has the potential to be both competitive and cooperative with the United States and other Western powers. The types of training, exercises, equipment, assessments, and infrastructure assistance the United States would offer would be limited in scope and number, primarily because Iraq would be viewed as having a relatively unpredictable foreign policy orientation. The DoD could pursue bilateral exercises on consequence management and disaster response, workshops focused on air traffic control, assessments of Iraq's regional airspace situation, and some military-to-military talks. There may be circumstances in which more-extensive security cooperation resources (such as specialized training for special forces, psychological operations [PSYOPS], or HUMINT) would be appropriate for an Islamist Iraqi state to help it fight Salafi-inspired terrorism, but the decision to provide such assistance would need to be weighed carefully. There is always a danger that DoD-provided assistance could in the future be used against U.S. forces if Iraq's foreign policy swings in a less favorable direction.

The United States could encourage an Islamist Iraq to participate in cooperative regional structures to help ward off such sources of instability as cross-border smuggling. Multilateral exercises, such as those that focus on regional cooperation as discussed previously, may still be possible and are likely to prove critical to maintaining some

access to key civilian and military leadership in Iraqi security services. These regional training events are particularly useful in encouraging cooperation on such issues as countering illicit trafficking and disaster preparedness—two key areas that generally have been able to break through barriers to cooperation because of their transnational nature.

Security cooperation with a relatively "incompatible-secure" Iraq—one in which an anti-West, nationalist dictatorship returns to Baghdad—could be envisioned, but likely would be circumscribed. Only limited education, defense and military contacts, workshops and conferences, and other USG activities would be appropriate. The types of issues discussed would be low-level matters of broad mutual interest—consequence management, search and rescue, etc. Potentially, representatives of an uncooperative Iraq could be observers at multinational exercises. The DoD might also seek to leverage other USG activities that it does not directly control by means of policy or resource oversight with an uncooperative partner. These activities include mostly State Department and USAID activities that focus on the rule of law, economic reform, and democracy-building. However, it is entirely possible that the United States could find common interest with an Iraqi dictatorship in a number of areas, including counterterrorism and deterrence of aggression (e.g., from Iran). In such a case, the United States should prepare to offer limited training and equipment as part of a scaled-back situational partnership.

In the case of an uncooperative state (especially one that threatens important U.S. interests in the region), the United States would need to consider a heavier footprint in the adjacent region to protect its security interests. A key reason for strongly engaging U.S. allies in the region would be to monitor and influence Iraqi activities. Workshops, conferences, and other meetings among multinational actors are one way to encourage supportive partners to remain alert concerning possible threats in the region and to consider measures to counter unpredictable outcomes.

Finally, the violence and humanitarian crisis that would likely accompany fragmentation of Iraq (the "Incompatible-insecure Afghanistan or Iraq" row on Figure 3.1) could compel the United States to work closely with some Iraqi domestic groups and alliances as well

as regional and international actors to help restore stability and avert regionalization of the conflict. The extent of U.S. involvement in a failed or failing state scenario would depend on many factors. Not least of these would be public and institutional fatigue in the United States after years of costly involvement in Iraq, which would tend to limit U.S. intervention. Despite this, U.S. planners would need to prepare to meet more-strenuous requirements in the event U.S. decisionmakers ordered such an intervention on a significant scale to protect key U.S. interests. The USG may need to work with other states and organizations to contain instability and to provide humanitarian relief. The United States might need to help set up and protect refugee centers within Iraq and provide aid to neighboring countries to control their own borders and provide for Iraqi refugees who manage to cross those borders. In addition, U.S. forces may be required to support international peacekeeping operations to help insulate major population concentrations from sectarian and criminal violence. Finally, U.S. forces may need to deter neighboring states from intervening to support Iraqi proxies.

Among domestic groups, the Iraqi Kurds would be a likely recipient of U.S. security assistance (and possibly would engage in a situational partnership with the United States) in the context of agreements that placate Turkish anxieties over PKK terrorism, the future of Kirkuk, and treatment of the Turkmen minority in northern Iraq. Assistance might include provision of training, equipment, physical security, and other aid to help ensure stability in Kurdish areas, to prevent the spread of violence into these areas, and to serve as a moderating influence on the Kurdish leadership. Such security cooperation could also serve to ensure U.S. access to bases in Iraqi Kurdistan from which U.S. forces could conduct humanitarian, peacekeeping, and counterterrorism operations.

In addition, the United States would need to continue partnering with tribes, particularly in Sunni areas, in an effort to locate, monitor, and attack al-Qaeda–affiliated terrorist groups attempting to exploit ungoverned areas as safe havens. The United States could offer training, equipment, and operational support to tribal militia elements; much of this would likely be provided by U.S. special operations forces.

And partnerships could be extended in some cases to alliances among various ethnic, tribal, or religious groups.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has considered a range of U.S. security relationship options for Iraq and Afghanistan. We conclude that a strengthened strategic partnership with Afghanistan and a more limited situational partnership with Iraq are the most appropriate options given current political and security trajectories. That said, we recognize the tremendous uncertainty surrounding the future political and security outcomes for both countries, and we account for such uncertainty by considering a variety of scenarios and assessing how U.S. security cooperation would vary in type and scope according to different outcomes. Our assessment also suggests that the United States would benefit from pursuing cooperative security activities and relationships with regional neighbors regardless of the outcomes in Iraq and Afghanistan, but that such regional activity may be even more critical if either develops into a largely uncooperative or failed state. This suggests that the U.S. work toward the creation of a cooperative regional context—a layered regional security framework—in which U.S. bilateral relations with Iraq and Afghanistan could develop. Such a context would best serve long-term U.S. interests in that it either could reinforce bilateral strategic partnerships with cooperative allies (or help bring them along toward more-cooperative postures) or could limit negative regional effects if Iraq or Afghanistan develop along uncooperative or failed trajectories.

Any of the scenarios described in this chapter—favorable or unfavorable to U.S. interests—would involve critical roles and responsibilities for U.S. military forces. The next chapter describes the particular demands that these roles would place on the U.S. Air Force, in terms both of developing bilateral and multilateral security cooperation programs and activities and of carrying out direct operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

CHAPTER FOUR

Long-Term Roles for the U.S. Air Force in Iraq and Afghanistan

Given long-term U.S. interests, the potential threats to those interests, and the preferred security relationships and emerging regional security structures, U.S. military forces will be heavily involved in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the surrounding regions for the foreseeable future. U.S. military commitments could include selected operational assistance and a wide range of security cooperation activities. USAF assets will play critical roles in both areas and are likely to be in high demand. This demand may be independent of—or in some cases, inversely related to—the numerical levels of U.S. ground forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.

U.S. military forces play two major roles in concert with their coalition partners in Iraq and Afghanistan. First, they conduct operational missions to directly counter insurgent and terrorist groups that threaten security, stability, and development. Second, they conduct activities associated with training, equipping, advising, and assisting (TEAA) Iraqi and Afghan forces. They train, equip, and mentor nascent Iraqi and Afghan security forces and institutions to eventually enable these nations to secure their interests independently against internal and external threats. As indigenous forces come on line, U.S. forces help them conduct their own security operations. The USAF is heavily involved in both roles in Iraq. In Afghanistan, the USAF has conducted direct operations since the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom in 2001; its involvement in building the Afghan Air Corps only began in late 2006.

Both the Iraqi and Afghan militaries face challenges that will preclude their ability to independently ensure their national security for years. As long as Kabul and Baghdad continue to desire close relations with the United States, the U.S. military will be required to support their national security during the intervening years—whether to bolster the development of those nations or to mitigate the effects of fragmentation. With substantial and growing pressures for major withdrawals of U.S. ground troops, the USAF will bear the brunt of this requirement, especially as combat troop levels diminish.[1] The faster the United States and its partners can develop effective indigenous airpower, the sooner the USAF can reduce its operational commitment. However, the USAF must be prepared for rapid changes in the requirement in the event of breakdowns in internal security or changes in the outlook of the indigenous government.

This chapter defines long-term roles and associated postures for the U.S. military—in particular the U.S. Air Force—in and around Iraq and Afghanistan. First, we describe how the Iraqi and Afghan governments view military power as instruments for countering the threats outlined in Chapter Two, what roles indigenous airpower might serve, and how development of those countries' air arms should proceed. We then postulate how the United States might employ and posture its forces to achieve coalition objectives, support the U.S. security relationships and security cooperation initiatives with Iraq and Afghanistan detailed in Chapter Three, and ensure leverage and influence toward preferred outcomes. Recognizing the need for flexibility in the face of political uncertainty, also discussed in Chapter Three, we conclude with a discussion of the implications of alternative political

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[1]   This is by no means news to the U.S. Air Force. As early as August 2005, General John Jumper, then Chief of Staff of the Air Force (CSAF), commented that as control of security transitions to the Iraqi military, they will continue to need "support from the air until they're able to set up their own ability to support themselves. And that's going to take a while, even after some future withdrawal of ground forces." The current CSAF, Gen. Michael Moseley, later stated that "as the Iraqi forces become much more capable and we are able to reduce our footprint of land component activities, I don't see the air component coming out of there quickly." See Eric Schmitt, "U.S. General Says Iraqis Will Need Longtime Support from Air Force," *New York Times*, August 30, 2005; and Michael Sirak, "Air Force Chief Sees U.S. Airpower Supporting Iraq for a 'Long Time,'" *Defense Daily*, April 12, 2006, p. 1.

outcomes in Iraq and Afghanistan for U.S. Air Force roles. Although we focus primarily on implications for the U.S. Air Force in this chapter, we derive them from U.S., Iraqi, and Afghan national and military needs discussed throughout this monograph.

Roles of Iraqi and Afghan Security Forces

Because of ongoing and heavy insurgent, terrorist, and criminal activity in Iraq and Afghanistan, indigenous security forces—both the police and the military—are working with international forces to counter and reduce internal threats to security, stability, and political reform. In Iraq, the Iraqi Police Service's stated mission is "to enforce the law, safeguard the public, and provide internal security at the local level."[2] The Iraqi armed forces are responsible for protecting Iraq's territorial integrity; preventing and responding to attacks upon vital national assets, critical installations, facilities, infrastructure, and lines of communication; supporting Iraqi civil security forces as necessary to provide internal security and stability; organizing, equipping, training and sustaining rapidly deployable military forces; and participating in domestic relief operations associated with natural or manmade disasters and humanitarian relief missions.[3] The roles of the Afghan National Army are to defeat terrorism and insurgency in Afghanistan; support the Afghan border police during emergencies and, if necessary, defend the territorial integrity of the nation; support the process of disarming illegal armed groups; assist the civilian authorities in disaster

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[2]   U.S. Department of Defense, *Report to Congress: Measuring Security and Stability in Iraq,* February 2006a, pp. 47–48.

[3]   In addition, Iraqi security forces should support civilian control of the military, respect democratic institutions and human rights, and serve as a stabilizing force that underwrites collective security in the region. See Government of Iraq, Ministry of Defense, *2005 Defence Plan*, draft, English translation, December 2004, Sec. 1.2, pp. 7–9. See also Government of Iraq, Ministry of Defense, *Defence Policy for Iraq*, white paper, Draft 1b, January 2005, pp. 4–8.

relief; and develop and strengthen bilateral and collective military relationships with coalition, allied, friendly, and neighboring countries.[4]

The goal of the Iraqi and Afghan governments and the international community is to bring peace, stability, and representative governance to Iraq and Afghanistan. As they succeed in doing so, the roles of police and military forces can be separated from each other in each country. Over the long term, forces associated with the interior ministries would remain focused on internal security and law enforcement, while the armed forces of the defense ministries would transition to defending the sovereignty and territory of each nation while serving as a "reserve" for internal security.

The Iraqi Air Force (IqAF) is a separate component of Iraq's armed forces. Currently, the missions of the IqAF are (1) command and control of air forces, (2) reconnaissance, (3) battlefield mobility, and (4) air transport. The IqAF Operational Air Headquarters in Baghdad exercises command and control. Iraqi aircraft provide very limited ISR support to Iraqi forces in the field, oil infrastructure surveillance, and border surveillance. Iraqi air transport is dedicated to transporting important people, providing humanitarian aid, and delivering troops and materiel. The Afghan Air Corps (AAC) remains a part of the ANA; it is not a separate component.[5] The AAC engages in such missions as distinguished visitor airlift, flood relief, airlift in support of interministerial operations, evacuation of battlefield casualties, and earthquake relief.[6] (The appendix describes force structures for the Iraqi Air Force and Afghan Air Corps as of May 2007.)

Undoubtedly, progress in Iraq and Afghanistan depends in large part on political accommodation, improvements in security, strengthening of government institutions and civil society, and economic development. But proper development and deployment of Iraqi and Afghan armed forces are also crucial to enabling those nations to stand

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[4]   Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 2005, p. 4.

[5]   There have been discussions over whether to build an independent Afghan air force. Author discussions with USAF officers in USCENTAF (March 2006) and the Air Staff (May 2006).

[6]   Email exchange between author and U.S. official in the OSC-A, April 11, 2006.

on their own feet. The forces' presence in multiple areas, along with a commensurate drop in security threats to average people and an improvement in infrastructure and services, would lend legitimacy to the central government. Indigenous forces should conduct all aspects of counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations, from collecting and synthesizing intelligence to planning and executing missions. They would ensure sovereignty and territorial integrity by controlling borders, undermining coercion by others, and responding to incursions or other aggressive actions. Iraqi and Afghan forces could also enhance regional security and stability by supporting common bilateral and multilateral interests and participating in regional security initiatives as equal partners.

Airpower can make major contributions to success in this regard. By nature, airpower allows the central government to rapidly—and in some cases more safely—reach out to its citizens with humanitarian assistance, electoral support, and visits by government officials, even in the hinterlands of the country. With proper air-ground coordination, airpower is a huge force multiplier for ground troops, providing a superior vantage point for their eyes and ears, supporting them with indirect fire, and helping ensure they have adequate supplies and medical support. Finally, airpower is broadly seen as a key element in guaranteeing sovereignty and as a sine qua non of national independence.

Developing Iraqi and Afghan Forces

Iraqi and Afghan security forces have a long way to go before they can effectively serve in the capacities stated above. At the time of this writing, the development of Iraqi and Afghan security forces is continuing at a relatively rapid pace. The ISF comprises some 152,300 Ministry of Defense (MOD) and 194,200 MOI forces trained and equipped by May 2007, for a total of about 346,500.[7] The IqAF numbers about 900

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7 U.S. Department of Defense, *Report to Congress: Measuring Stability and Security in Iraq*, June 2007, p. 30.

airmen, and there are plans to field 3,285 by the end of 2007.[8] Manpower goals for the ANA are limited to 70,000 in accordance with the post-Bonn Agreement, in addition to a planned 82,000 members of the Afghan National Police (ANP).[9] About 50 percent of the ANA goal had been achieved by spring 2007, but the desired 2007 time frame for achieving 70,000 troops is likely to be delayed until 2009.[10] The manpower goal for the AAC is 3,000, a number also mandated in the post-Bonn Agreement.

These manpower numbers hide a bevy of challenges that Iraq and Afghanistan face in fielding forces capable of independently achieving key objectives in support of national security. Chapter Two outlined some of these challenges, such as divided loyalties and corruption. Additional challenges include recruiting and retaining competent personnel, adequately training them and teaching them English, attaining consistent funding profiles, forging command and control and logistics systems, procuring needed equipment, and strengthening the security institutions that oversee and provide for fielded forces. While the Afghan and Iraqi armies face many of these challenges, U.S. and coalition partners have placed great emphasis on developing solutions to enable ground forces in particular to achieve independence in the near to medium term.

However, the DoD does not appear to accord the same emphasis to the nascent air arms of Iraq and Afghanistan, where the challenges are greatly magnified in comparison to those facing the ground

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[8] U.S. Department of Defense, 2007, p. 42. The likelihood of such a huge increase is arguable.

[9] See Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (2005), p. 5; and CDR John Schultz, "ANP Pay and Rank Reform," OSC-A Police Reform Directorate, November 30, 2005, p. 2; and House Armed Services Committee, "Security and Stability in Afghanistan," morning session of hearing, Washington, D.C.: Federal News Service, Inc., February 13, 2007. Afghan officials have expressed a need for 150,000–200,000 troops to ensure Afghan security and sovereignty. Author discussions in Kabul, November 2005. At one point, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld had suggested scaling the ANA goal back to 50,000. See Vance Serchuk, "Don't Undercut the Afghan Army," *Washington Post*, June 2, 2006, p. A19.

[10] U.S. Department of State, Bureau of International Information Programs, State News Service, "Afghan Security Forces Make Impressive Professional Gains," Washington, D.C., January 22, 2007.

forces. The USAF, particularly the U.S. Central Command Air Forces (USCENTAF), does place a priority on organizing, training, and equipping the IqAF and the AAC. In fact, as of mid-2007 the USAF is acting to significantly expand the number of advisors available to USCENTAF for this task and to institute a predeployment advisor course.[11] But the relative lack of emphasis in the joint world could have significant implications for the USAF in the future. On the one hand, the focus on Iraqi and Afghan ground forces helps set the stage for the withdrawal of many U.S. ground forces, especially from Iraq. On the other, the priority accorded to developing Iraqi and Afghan air-power lags well behind that of the armies and may be inadequate to the task at hand. Out of a list of 184 MNSTC-I funding priorities for the Iraqi military in 2006, the highest priority IqAF item rates 171st.[12] In Afghanistan, the AAC has 21 aircraft of seven different types (mainly Russian) in various states of mission capability, and building its capacity has only recently become a priority for the coalition.

The combination of the relatively slow pace and complexity of organizing, equipping, and training indigenous air forces means that the USAF will probably remain heavily involved in Iraq and Afghanistan—both operationally and in terms of training and advising—long after the United States withdraws many of its ground troops from the two nations. Until indigenous air arms are able to conduct operations independently, many of the operational requirements levied on airpower (e.g., ISR, strike, mobility) will fall on the shoulders of the USAF for years to come. Just as U.S. ground troops can leave as more robust and independent Iraqi ground capabilities (both military and police) come on line to conduct CT and COIN operations, so too might USAF assets be drawn down as Iraqi and Afghan airpower become more capable and independent in support of those indigenous ground capabilities and of national objectives. The USAF should seek

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[11] USCENTAF is expanding its force of air advisors considerably, and the USAF's Air Education and Training Command is taking the lead in predeployment advisor training. Briefing by USCENTAF Air Advisory Division, "Building Airpower Capacity Across the USCENTAF AOR," 2007.

[12] Author email exchange with U.S. officer in CAFTT, May 22, 2006.

to use the entire range of security cooperation activities identified in Chapter Three to build and sustain indigenous operational capabilities, strengthen the indigenous air arms as institutions, and encourage positive interaction with air arms in nearby states.

However, while the U.S. Air Force might implement many of these security cooperation activities, it does not control much of the funding for—and, therefore, the priority of—efforts to build and expand Iraqi and Afghan airpower. Moreover, the DoD is unlikely to receive supplemental funding from Congress indefinitely, nor can the USAF predict and plan for consistent levels of resources for the activities its air advisors implement. If Iraqi and Afghan government revenues grow and military institutions expand, indigenous resources can sustain acquisition of new equipment, training, spare parts, and other items necessary to field competent air forces. In the interim, however, such indigenous resources will be lacking, especially in Afghanistan. Thus, the USAF leadership must be prepared to advocate for greater emphasis on building Iraqi and Afghan airpower within DoD and in Congress—and to help their counterparts in the IqAF and the AAC play a proactive role in internal planning, programming, and budgeting processes that are quite different from U.S. processes.

Unfortunately, in the current U.S. defense budget environment, forging sustained support for increased emphasis on building Iraqi and Afghan airpower will likely be a hard sell. Long-term sources of funding are presently unclear. The USAF has shown that it can make internal trade-offs to increase the size and capability of its air advisory cadre—both within U.S. Air Force Special Operations Command (USAFSOC) and the wider Air Force. But there appears to be little slack in the system when one considers that the USAF potentially faces increased obligations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere around the world over the next several years. It must meet severe modernization and recapitalization challenges at the same time as there is downward pressure on its budget. Therefore, the USAF will have to hone arguments for according a higher priority to building partner capacity in the context of trade-offs with other services and other USG activities in Iraq and Afghanistan. In other words, the USAF leadership will have to demonstrate that added USG resources for accelerating the

establishment of competent Iraqi and Afghan air arms will have a high payoff in terms of providing CT and COIN capability to the security forces and legitimacy to the central governments.

Given budget limitations, it is all the more important for DoD and the Air Force to prioritize the kinds of activities they engage in as they build up Iraqi and Afghan airpower.

Building Iraqi Airpower

In the latter half of 2005, two and a half years after the fall of Saddam and a year and a half after establishment of the MNSTC-I to develop Iraqi security forces, the USAF was tasked to assess and develop the IqAF. Until this time, coalition support for the IqAF had been largely limited to a five-person air cell in MNSTC-I and a special agreement for the USAF to transfer three C-130E tactical airlifters and train Iraqi aircrew and maintainers on these aircraft. Much of the rest of Iraq's air force was grounded or prone to safety problems. By December 2005, however, the USAF had become heavily involved in developing the IqAF and refurbishing and sustaining its assets, and a large Coalition Air Force Transition Team (CAFTT), along with advisory support teams deployed to assist Iraqi Air Force squadrons, had replaced the small air cell. USCENTAF convened a Comparative Aircraft Working Group (CAWG) to define an indigenous air capability suited to counterinsurgency. This resulted in a study that recommended procurement of 164 turbine-powered aircraft at a cost ranging from $0.5 billion to $2.5 billion; the IqAF commander, Maj. Gen. Kamal Abdul-Sattar Barzanjy, accepted this plan as the way ahead for the IqAF.[13]

The CAWG study derives roles for Iraq's air force from Iraqi national interests and threats to those interests. It then states the required air capabilities from Iraqi and CAWG perspectives. Although the two perspectives are quite similar, they differ in several respects. First, the CAWG includes command and control (C2) and flight train-

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[13] See USCENTAF, *Comparative Aircraft Study for Iraq Air Force Counter Insurgency Air Operations,* Executive Summary, December 10, 2005a, p. 2. Also derived from author discussions with USCENTAF officers involved in assisting the Iraqi Air Force and the CAFTT in Baghdad.

ing as required capabilities, arguing that the former is critical to integrated air-ground operations and that the latter is crucial to growing and sustaining an adequate inventory of pilots over the long term. Second, the CAWG breaks out special assignment airlift missions (SAAM) and disaster response/civil search and rescue as separate capabilities designed to enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of Iraq's government. Third, the CAWG replaces the Iraqi-stated "offensive strike" with "light attack," an important differentiation that speaks directly to the fears of Iraq's neighbors. Other Iraqi- and CAWG-required capabilities are ISR (especially for ground support, infrastructure security, and border security), rotary wing tactical and battlefield mobility, fixed wing air transport, and air defense.[14]

The CAWG effort provides an excellent starting point for development of the IqAF and a template for similar TEAA activities elsewhere (including Afghanistan). However, some additional areas require increased attention. A capability that should be emphasized in both the battlefield mobility and air transport areas is casualty evacuation and medical evacuation (CASEVAC/MEDEVAC). Enhancing Iraqi medical support would help make indigenous security forces confident that they will be tended to quickly and will survive if injured, an extremely important motivating factor for troops in harm's way.[15] This should include increasing the availability of well-trained and adequately equipped Iraqi medics and training them in search-and-rescue techniques. The benefit of emphasis on CASEVAC/MEDEVAC lies not only in improved battlefield performance but also in enhanced government ability to deliver humanitarian aid to its citizens and thereby shore up its legitimacy in their eyes. This mission set would also apply in the future to multilateral cooperation on "soft" issues.

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[14] USCENTAF, *Comparative Aircraft Study for Iraq Air Force Counter Insurgency Air Operations,* Part Two: *Iraqi Air Force Strategy to Task Assessment*, December 10, 2005b, pp. 6–8.

[15] The effect of MEDEVAC on the fighting motivation of Philippine forces in Balikatan during counterterrorist operations in 2002 was pronounced. Until night MEDEVAC was introduced, forces would only conduct raids during early daylight hours, severely reducing their effectiveness. The introduction of night MEDEVAC led to 24-hour operations and considerable success in these operations.

Procuring and absorbing a fleet of aircraft such as that proposed in the USCENTAF study will be difficult without substantial and sustained resources from both the U.S. and Iraqi governments. The Iraqis must not only acquire the aircraft but must also maintain and modify them to ensure their utility for years to come. But procuring aircraft is only half of the challenge. The Iraqi Air Force will need long-term support to establish a training pipeline, develop a system for recruiting and retaining high-quality personnel, improve their quality of life, and develop a logistics capability. The current manpower pool is relatively senior, but seniority in the IqAF does not translate into experienced aircrew or maintainers because few of them have retained their skills, and even gaining basic flying proficiency remains a problem, as does maintaining an adequate pipeline for English language training. It will take some time for Iraq to grow a force of experienced aircrew and maintainers, even if equipment is available and sustainable.[16] Moreover, education for Iraqi airmen must emphasize professionalism and appropriate conduct under representative government if the IqAF is to serve as a force for national unity.

Air-ground and air-naval coordination in training operations is a critical element of IqAF development and overall Iraqi success in countering insurgency and terrorism—and ultimately defending its borders. The USAF will need to help develop a training and exercise regimen to teach Iraqi airmen how to work with Iraqi soldiers and sailors to conduct battlefield mobility, share real-time ISR, provide close air support (CAS), and plan missions. Without such a program, the Iraqis will not gain the full benefits airpower can offer in counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations.

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[16] It can take upward of four and one-half years of flight training and flying experience to produce an experienced fighter pilot. If the academic and professional development training required to produce a competent pilot is included, the time line is significantly longer. Indeed, it would not be unreasonable to expect it to take eight or more years for Iraq to produce an experienced fighter pilot from scratch. See William W. Taylor, James H. Bigelow, S. Craig Moore, Leslie Wickman, Brent Thomas, and Richard S. Marken, *Absorbing Air Force Fighter Pilots: Parameters, Problems and Policy Options*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MR-1550-AF, 2002, pp. 17, 23–26; and William W. Taylor, S. Craig Moore, and Charles Robert Roll, Jr., *The Air Force Pilot Shortage: A Crisis for Operational Units*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MR-1204-AF, 2000, p. 12.

Naturally, USAF support to IqAF force planning focuses on how to build and sustain a force that best supports COIN with airpower under reasonable expectations of capability and budget. The current emphasis on CT and COIN operations in IqAF training and acquisition makes sense in light of insurgent and terrorist activity. This in itself will take years to fully develop in the best of circumstances. In the medium term, however, focusing exclusively on COIN capabilities could leave the IqAF less relevant to Iraqi national security in the event that insurgent and terrorist activity is successfully brought under control. Ignoring the IqAF's longer-term requirements risks a loss of U.S. leverage and influence if the Iraqis turn elsewhere in the future (to Russia, China, or even Iran) for help.

In this sense, there would be great benefit in the medium term to helping the Iraqis at least plant the seeds for deterring external aggression, limiting coercion, protecting Iraqi sovereignty, and enhancing regional stability in the long term. This would involve thinking about Iraq's national defense needs, considering the types of capabilities that would be appropriate, and developing plans for training and equipping the IqAF in the context of a strong situational partnership. To start, Iraq and the coalition could undertake a study of Iraq's air defense and air sovereignty needs and explore alternatives for meeting these needs—including a balance of C2 and radars, interceptor aircraft limited to the air-to-air role, and surface-to-air missile and gun systems. As indicated in Chapter One, Iraq has traditionally been a "middle power," and its ability to protect itself is important both to its own self-image and its willingness to participate in regional security frameworks. Thinking about these longer-term missions now could better link near- and medium-term development of infrastructure (including bases and facilities, training, and personnel), acquisition and maintenance of equipment, and definition of roles and missions with longer-term strategy and force planning. It would also help maintain the influence of the United States to ensure that Iraq stays on a responsible path that enhances regional stability. It is clear, however, that in the near term the IqAF will need to focus on the basics of building and sustaining an air arm that can serve the pressing needs of internal security.

Introducing ground attack or CAS capabilities to the IqAF, however, will require a great deal of caution for two reasons. First, there is a danger that these attack capabilities could be misused by individuals or groups for purposes that neither the Iraqi government nor the United States considers valid (e.g., for family or clan vendettas or for purely sectarian reasons). Second, over time, Iraq's neighbors could become alarmed that Iraq is developing what they perceive as offensive capabilities. It is certainly arguable whether the USAF should seek to provide attack capabilities to the IqAF while instability and uncertainty in Iraq are so high. The USAF should try to avoid the impression that it is choosing sides when sectarian strife is intensifying. However, the Iraqis may very well seek these capabilities elsewhere if the United States refuses to provide them, and there is little the United States could do about it. This could reduce the U.S. ability to influence how attack capabilities are used.

The United States is likely to help the IqAF build a light attack capability to enable it to strike insurgents and support Iraqi Army units. Fortunately, professionalism in the IqAF appears to be relatively high, and sectarianism seems less of a problem there than in other parts of the ISF.[17] To help prevent misuse of assets, the USAF should work to forge USAF-IqAF interoperability and to encourage full integration of IqAF assets into a common U.S.-Iraqi targeting process that validates targets and provides U.S. visibility into Iraqi CAS and other attack sorties. This would help ensure that Iraqi national interest, not personal or sectarian interests, drives targeting decisions. In addition, professionalism should continue to be a priority in training and professional military education for IqAF officers and enlisted personnel.

Inasmuch as U.S. advisors retain influence with Iraq's decision-makers, those advisors should encourage Iraqi forces to develop with the sensitivities of other states in mind.[18] To assuage concerns of neigh-

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[17] Author discussions with officers at USCENTAF, September and December 2006.

[18] For example, an Iraqi army perceived as overly large and mechanized—even if described as defensive by a nonaggressive Iraqi government—likely would be deemed threatening to border states, notably Kuwait (but potentially Saudi Arabia, Iran, and possibly Jordan and Israel as well). Other threatening capabilities include a large air force made up of jets with multirole or attack capabilities; long-range air capabilities (either in strike platforms or in the

bors and other states in the region, the USAF should encourage transparency in IqAF force planning, acquisition of equipment, and training. For example, the USAF might advance the cause of transparency by encouraging the IqAF to invite representatives from the air arms of surrounding countries to observe Iraqi training exercises as a way of demonstrating that Iraq is not pursuing aggressive aims. To the extent possible, the USAF should act to steer Iraqi planners in the future away from longer-range aircraft and aerial refueling capabilities.[19] Making the plans and processes for building Iraqi forces for the longer term transparent could help ease fears of neighbors who are concerned about a resurgent, aggressive Iraq and could improve the prospects for regional stability.

Building Afghan Airpower

The USAF became fully engaged in AAC development in late 2006 at the request of the Afghan government and the Combined Forces Command in Afghanistan (CFC-A). Prior to this, the coalition air division supporting the AAC looked much like the MNSTC-I air cell before establishment of the CAFTT in Iraq. It consisted of eight well-meaning, hard-working military personnel and contractors, but it was severely understaffed. It focused on near-term issues and lacked the unique operational and institutional perspective that the USAF brings to the table. The AAC was not being prepared to provide Afghanistan with an independent air capability.[20] The absence of a long view did not bode well either for the ability of Afghanistan to secure its interests or for controlling future demands on the USAF.[21]

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ability to conduct aerial refueling); pursuit of chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear weapons; pursuit of ballistic or cruise missiles; significant air assault capabilities (something the Iraqis may see as critical to successful CT and COIN operations, and rightfully so); and extensive special operations capabilities.

[19] Their high cost alone could deter Iraqi development until the distant future.

[20] The air division was developing concepts for an air corps that mimics U.S. Army structures, with air capabilities attached to army organizations. Under this concept, each ANA corps would have an air wing, each division an air squadron.

[21] According to one U.S. officer familiar with coalition and Afghan TEAA emphases, a recent six-hour briefing to an official DoD contingent in Kabul on Afghan security develop-

Since USCENTAF became involved in late 2006, it has established a CAFTT-like structure in Afghanistan and begun supporting AAC training, planning, procurement, and infrastructure improvement. With USAF involvement, indigenous airpower should play a critical role in strengthening Afghan government legitimacy and effectiveness. In light of the Afghan interests and objectives outlined in Chapter One and the roles of the ANA described earlier in this chapter, the Afghan Air Corps should be organized, trained, and equipped in the future to

- transport the president and government officials to and from points in Afghanistan and other countries
- ferry humanitarian aid to remote regions of Afghanistan and, ultimately, disaster relief to neighboring countries
- airlift troops and materiel within Afghanistan
- evacuate casualties from battle zones and conduct medical evacuations to rear area medical facilities
- execute combat and civil search and rescue
- conduct surveillance of border regions
- provide ISR support to troops in the field
- monitor and help eradicate poppy production
- provide timely, accurate fire support to friendly forces engaged with the enemy
- provide air sovereignty.

These capabilities will take many years to build and will require sustained support from the international community in the form of resources and training. Introduction of capabilities will need to be methodical and take a gradual "crawl-walk-run" approach that focuses first on education and basic airmanship. Some of these capabilities should be emphasized more in the near term because they are both critical to establishing government credibility and less demanding in terms

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ments by CFC-A, OSC-A, and other coalition organizations failed to mention building air capability at all. When this same contingent met with Afghan defense officials, the *first* issue they raised was help building the air corps. The highest-priority capability was battlefield CASEVAC; U.S. forces do not evacuate Afghan wounded at this time.

of training and equipping. The most important capabilities to address early on would be those that help the central government "show the flag" and extend legitimacy, if not control, since "it will be vital for the Afghan government to extend its reach to underserved areas of Afghanistan."[22] These capabilities should include

- special airlift missions for transporting government officials and helping them administer services
- transport of troops and supplies
- humanitarian assistance with delivery of needed supplies, medical services
- battlefield CASEVAC
- rudimentary ISR for border surveillance and counternarcotics.

Undoubtedly, the initial USAF focus should be how to use Afghanistan's existing air assets to meet some of the demands of these near-term capabilities. Consultation with combat aviation advisors from the USAFSOC's 6th Special Operations Squadron (SOS) can be invaluable here because of their extensive experience in training other foreign air forces on non-U.S. (including Russian) equipment. Such advice would also be effective in helping the AAC develop concepts for conducting missions in the Afghan milieu and operating with Afghan ground forces. Over the longer term, the USAF can help Afghanistan appropriately equip its air corps and advise Afghan planners against assembling a hodge-podge force that would be difficult to sustain over time. This does not necessarily mean that the AAC should be equipped by the United States; aircraft from other sources may be more suitable to the Afghan environment.[23] In addition, it is critical that the USAF

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[22] "Verbal Briefing by Mr. Tom Koenigs, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, to the United Nations Security Council on the Situation in Afghanistan," March 14, 2006.

[23] For example, Afghans are familiar with Russian equipment, the mainstay of the current AAC. Moreover, the Russians made modifications to Russian aircraft during their occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s to enable them to operate at the high altitudes Afghanistan's topography demands. However, while up-front costs for Russian aircraft may be low, one can pay dearly to attain spare parts and conduct overhauls required later on. Russian

give high priority to helping the Afghans develop a viable sustainment plan for existing and new equipment.

Moreover, the USAF should help the AAC develop organizations, leaders, aircrew, maintainers, base support capabilities, and a sustainable training pipeline. Building a viable, self-sustaining Afghan air capability will require consistent investment in building human capital. This should include not only basic military and technical training but also general education, including English language proficiency and civics. At the same time, the USAF should seek to help the Afghans build the AAC's institutional capabilities. Afghan airmen should receive training and mentoring in planning, programming, and budgeting to help ensure the AAC's ability to plan for the future and vie for scarce resources—whether as part of the ANA or as a separate service.

Building a viable Afghan air force is important both for Afghanistan's national interests and for establishing a capable U.S. partner that can help counter terrorism and reduce narcotics trafficking. Afghan government budgets alone are not likely to support such a force, and it will require sustained financial, material, and advisory assistance from external sources. NATO and individual European countries might also be enlisted to help build and sustain Afghan airpower. It is imperative that the USAF remain heavily involved in building the AAC in much the same way as it is doing with the IqAF.

Building Air Capability in the Iraqi and Afghan Police Forces
In both Iraq and Afghanistan, the USAF should be prepared to play a role in supporting other aspects of state capacity. At the time of writing, USAF security forces in Iraq already are training Iraqi police and air advisors are helping establish an air traffic control system that could someday support both military and civilian applications. USAF assets might also be called upon to provide training and operational support for Iraqi and Afghan intelligence agencies, border patrol forces, and—

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equipment can come from many sources—for example, Poland is the source of Iraq's new Mi-17s. Some reports suggest that the United States already has approached Russia for army equipment for Afghanistan. See Thomas Harding, "U.S. Sets Up £215m Deal for Afghan Arms—from Russia," *London Daily Telegraph*, May 22, 2006.

in the case of Afghanistan—counternarcotics efforts. In the future, if the security and political situations in the two countries stabilize, their military forces may be redirected toward national defense and away from internal security. If the Iraqi and Afghan governments emulate emerging trends in other states in their regions, they will increasingly rely on the forces of their interior ministries, such as police forces, to counter terrorist threats and ameliorate undergoverned areas within their borders. Because airpower is a critical tool for defeating terrorist groups and undermining their support, the USAF might have opportunities in the future to help enhance the capabilities of Iraqi and Afghan police forces. This might involve different operational, TEAA, legal, and humanitarian issues than those faced by the national air forces, and the USAF should seek to illuminate these issues to the extent warranted by security and political developments in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Encouraging Cooperation Among Regional Air Forces

The ministries of defense in both Afghanistan and Iraq have expressed the desire for extensive security cooperation with other nations in the region. Afghanistan's National Military Strategy states that the Ministry of Defense will "in concert with other agencies and ministries of the Government of Afghanistan, develop and strengthen bilateral and collective military relationships with Coalition, allied, friendly and neighboring countries."[24] The Iraqi Ministry of Defense "envisions achieving [Iraq's] security objectives in the context of maintaining strong security ties to friendly countries and participating in regional security arrangements that promote stability and nonaggression."[25] It emphasizes that Iraq "will continue to seek opportunities to engage our regional friends and neighbors through such measures as military-to-military exchanges, joint training and professional development,

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[24] Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 2005, p. 4.

[25] Government of Iraq, 2005, pp. 6–7. The paper adds that "Iraq will be a force for self-determination, human rights, the rule of law, and regional stability."

and intelligence-sharing exercises, to enhance our mutual security and stability."[26]

As discussed in Chapter Three, the DoD should work to encourage multilateral, cooperative structures to help integrate Iraqi and Afghan forces into regional security arrangements. As the IqAF and AAC develop, the USAF should help them identify opportunities for cooperative activities with other regional air forces. The goals of such USAF assistance would be to (1) support the establishment of a culture of engagement leading to cooperative regional security structures described in Chapter Three, (2) encourage parties to share concepts of airpower employment, and (3) improve transparency to neighbors as the IqAF and AAC continue to develop. Security cooperation activities should be geared in part toward encouraging Iraqi and Afghan airmen to establish and sustain military-to-military contacts with counterparts in other regional states and to participate in regional conferences, bilateral exercises with neighbors, and multilateral exercises.

Areas where other states in the region might contribute to enhancements in Iraqi and Afghan capabilities would include border security, infrastructure security, peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief. Areas where emerging Iraqi and Afghan forces (military and police) eventually might contribute to enhancements in regional capabilities include expanding government control, services, and legitimacy; building infrastructure; counterterrorism activities (including concepts of operations for direct action, intelligence-gathering, and denial of support bases); operations under the rule of law; and civil-military relations. Areas where Iraqi and Afghan militaries might cooperate with regional counterparts to enhance stability include border security,[27] counternarcotics, and visibility into each other's capabilities and intentions through observation of exercises, military-to-military exchanges, and open discussion of security concerns.

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[26] Government of Iraq, 2004, Sec. 4.2, p. 30.

[27] For example, the Doha II Conference mentioned in Chapter Three focused on border security (interdiction) and border management (revenue collection). It was cochaired by Germany and Qatar and included Afghanistan and its neighbors—21 countries and eight organizations in all. "Verbal Briefing by Mr. Tom Koenigs," 2006.

The USAF should encourage interaction among air forces in the region and inclusion of Iraqi and Afghan airmen in meetings, conferences, exercises, and so on. For example, the CSAF might suggest full participation by Iraq's air commander in future Middle East air symposia, during which air chiefs of a number of Arab and Western countries discuss issues of mutual concern—such as homeland security, humanitarian relief operations, medical support, counterterrorism, and peacekeeping—as well as emerging concepts for employment of airpower. In addition, the USAF can encourage Iraqi and Afghan involvement in multilateral efforts, such as regional airspace initiatives, conferences for noncommissioned officers, and safety workshops.

Concluding Remarks

This analysis has made a case for increasing resources and coalition and USAF effort devoted to building the Iraqi and Afghan air forces. This is a multiyear endeavor that should extend well into the next decade—as long as indigenous government outlooks and behavior remain relatively compatible with U.S. interests and progress is being made on security and other fronts. Over time, Iraqi and Afghan security forces hopefully would continue to take over from U.S. and coalition troops as the primary ground forces conducting patrols, sweeps, and attacks on insurgent strongholds. They would increasingly expand the types and numbers of missions they could execute with less and less support from international forces. The Air Force and DoD can shape their security cooperation activities to pursue similar goals with Iraqi and Afghan air forces.

USAF Direct Operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Surrounding Regions

Despite the long-term goal of self-supporting security capabilities, Iraqi and Afghan government forces will continue to lack a number of capabilities that are critical to the successful prosecution of counterinsurgency and counterterrorism campaigns—especially air capabilities. It will take some time for Iraq and Afghanistan to develop the appro-

priate ISR, C2, light attack, mobility, and communications capabilities necessary to operate effectively against insurgents and minimize undergoverned areas. And Iraqi and Afghan forces will lack the ability to protect borders and deter external aggression, especially in light of severe constraints on their defense budgets (most particularly in Afghanistan).

Because the USAF provides many of these capabilities, it should plan to remain busy in Iraq and Afghanistan for the foreseeable future to help them steadily improve their security. It should expect to operate at a relatively high tempo in and around these countries for years—with or without significant drawdowns in U.S. troops—and must plan accordingly. The Air Force, and airpower in general, will continue to play a critical role in countering insurgency and terrorism, securing infrastructure and borders, deterring aggression and countering coercion, and potentially reducing the need for the development of large, potentially destabilizing armies, especially in Iraq's case.

A key issue that will need to be resolved with great care is whether and in what manner U.S. ISR and strike assets will be employed to support Iraqi and Afghan ground forces. It is likely that feuds and rivalries among ethnic groups, tribes, families, and individual warlords will remain a source of violence in the future; members of government security forces could be involved in such internecine conflict. There is a risk that U.S. forces, particularly the Air Force, could be unwittingly drawn into such violence. As a result, they could be perceived as choosing sides in sectarian and other local conflicts, thereby upsetting or destabilizing what will likely continue to be a delicate political balance in each country. Air support to indigenous ground units therefore will require a proper buffering process that filters out invalid operations and targets. It is difficult to conceive of such a process without U.S. control and oversight. U.S. tactical air controllers, intelligence analysts, and missions planners will be needed on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan until U.S. air attack capabilities are no longer required. Moreover, the United States must continue to provide support and force protection for these forces as well as the locally based air assets themselves. This signifies that there will be a minimum essential level of U.S. ground presence—including combat troops—in those countries

as long as the USAF continues to conduct attack and other operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Even as U.S. ground troops withdraw, therefore, a substantial U.S. ground component will need to remain as long as locally based USAF support to indigenous troops is needed.

Operational Tasks USAF Assets Will Be Asked to Accomplish

If the risks associated with directly supporting host-nation forces could be minimized, U.S. air and space power could serve very important purposes when employed in concert with these forces. First, the capabilities air and space assets bring to bear would be considerable force multipliers for indigenous ground units. Second, although U.S. air assets would be providing critical military support, operations would maintain a local "face" for average Iraqi and Afghan citizens because host-government forces would dominate ground operations. The Air Force would also serve as a deterrent to outside interference and a primary guarantor of host-nation sovereignty over its airspace until indigenous air arms acquire the appropriate capabilities.

The following paragraphs describe the tasks the Air Force would likely continue to accomplish with compatible governments in Kabul and Baghdad and how the level of effort on these tasks might change over time. Many of these tasks would support either direct U.S. operations or host-nation operations.

Training, Equipping, Advising. As indicated in the previous section, the USAF should expect its personnel to be engaged in training, equipping, and advising the IqAF and the AAC and conducting institutional engagement with them. The USAF should plan for dedicated involvement in building these capabilities for many years.

ISR. Requirements for ISR are likely to continue at a high level for some time, including surveillance of borders, convoy routes, infrastructure (e.g., pipelines), urban areas, poppy production regions (in Afghanistan), as well as individuals of high interest. There will continue to be a need for both ISR platforms and experienced, regionally savvy analysts and intelligence interpreters to help process, exploit, and disseminate intelligence information. Hopefully, the IqAF and AAC would build their ISR capacity to enable greater support of Iraqi and Afghan ground forces and to cover more target areas for more hours

of the day. But the indigenous capability will require many years to develop into a national asset, leaving the USAF to continue meeting most of the overall requirements. These would likely diminish as the governments take more control and insurgent and terrorist operations decrease. However, there still may be insurgent and/or terrorist problems and undergoverned areas, and U.S. ISR assets may support counternarcotics activities in Afghanistan for an extended period. As U.S. ground troops are drawn down, the United States will need to consider how to share U.S. ISR products with the Iraqis and Afghans. As indigenous ISR capabilities expand, the USAF might need to consider concepts for combined air tasking processes to deconflict ISR tasking. ISR requirements are likely to be among the most enduring of USAF operational tasks in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Strategic and Tactical Airlift. Remaining U.S. and host-nation forces will continue to rely on both strategic airlift to provide rapid, reliable transport from outside the regions and tactical airlift to ferry troops and their materiel quickly and safely within Iraq and Afghanistan. When necessary, U.S. airlift capability would provide emergency reinforcement of ground forces. U.S. C-130s will be needed even after the majority of U.S. ground troops leave to continue sustaining Iraqi and Afghan forces. Such assets can also deliver humanitarian aid to outlying regions. Along with ISR, airlift is likely to remain an enduring task for USAF assets. However, demand for USAF airlift assets likely would diminish if indigenous lift capability rises, roads become safer due to a lessened threat from insurgents, and host governments hire reliable contractors to accomplish some of this mission under more-stable security conditions. Notably, U.S., coalition, and host-government decisionmakers would need to balance the use of U.S. mobility assets against their potentially deleterious effect on efforts to shore up government legitimacy in the eyes of indigenous populations.

Close Air Support. USAF assets will continue to provide rapid and overwhelming firepower to Iraqi, Afghan, and coalition units in contact with enemy forces, including on-call close air support (XCAS). The need for this will depend on the extent of progress toward diminishing insurgencies and disarming illegal militias and warlords. As dis-

cussed above, a critical issue will be how USAF assets will be employed in direct support of Iraqi and Afghan ground units.

Striking High-Value Targets (HVTs). Terrorist groups will maintain a presence in Iraq and Afghanistan as long as significant areas of those countries remain undergoverned by the central governments. As such, the USAF will continue to provide the capability for rapid engagement of high-value targets for direct counterterrorism operations. In addition, USAF assets may interdict key targets in border areas, especially where ground forces are out of range and cannot respond to fleeting targets in a timely manner. The USAF can expect the need for these types of missions to be episodic.

Aerial Refueling. The USAF will continue to provide aerial refueling for USAF, USN, and other air assets, especially to maintain long-duration airborne surveillance and strike missions. The requirement for aerial refueling should diminish over time. However, this will depend upon the need for these missions and the basing access U.S. forces enjoy in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the surrounding regions. In-country basing would reduce the requirement for aerial refueling.

Base Support and Force Protection. As long as USAF assets are based in or near Iraq and Afghanistan (see the basing discussion below), they will require base support, logistics, and force protection to support USAF operations and ensure the security of personnel on the ground. The USAF will need to work closely with the theater command and the U.S. Army to ensure that they do not withdraw capabilities essential to the security and unimpeded conduct of U.S. air operations from bases inside Iraq and Afghanistan. For example, removing counterbattery capabilities without alternative means of airfield defense could leave bases more vulnerable to mortar attack. For the most part, U.S. and allied ground forces have maintained security in areas contiguous to bases from which U.S. air forces operate, while USAF force protection assets have maintained internal security. As U.S. ground units pass security of areas "outside the wire" to indigenous forces, USAF and other force protection assets will need to develop close working relationships with those forces to ensure continued security of bases from which U.S. forces operate.

Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR) and CASEVAC/MEDVAC. The USAF should maintain the capabilities to conduct CSAR and to MEDEVAC U.S., Iraqi, and Afghan military and civilian personnel to advanced care facilities inside and outside Iraq and Afghanistan, both for battle-related injuries and for humanitarian reasons. MEDEVAC is a key enabler to host-government efforts to "win hearts and minds" and to help ensure the loyalty of indigenous security forces. As described in the previous section, it will be important early on to put a host-government face on CSAR and CASEVAC/MEDEVAC operations.

Deterrence and Defense of Territory and Airspace (Involves Numerous Tasks). Finally, USAF assets are likely to be called upon to help the host governments ensure sovereignty over their airspace, to counter coercion by other nations, and to deter and, if necessary, defeat attacks that are beyond the capabilities of emerging Afghan and Iraqi security forces. This role will require capabilities to intercept potentially threatening aircraft and to help counter or blunt incursions by organized combat forces on the ground. The USAF may need to deploy additional capabilities at times of heightened tension, and the capacity for strengthening Air Force posture in the region should be in place prior to such deployments. In addition, in the event that Iran acquires nuclear weapons, the United States could provide assurances to Iraq and Afghanistan that U.S. forces will help counter Iranian attempts at coercion. This may require the United States to consider deployment of ballistic missile defenses on Iraqi and/or Afghan territory, as well as periodic deployment of USAF strike assets for deterrent purposes.

Ensuring "Jointness" in Planning in the Theater

It goes without saying that accomplishing these tasks requires a systematic approach to planning that involves all components of the theater command. Jointness, in fact, is supposed to be a staple of U.S. military strategy.[28] To date, it is apparent from discussions with airmen that

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[28] The 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review describes a shift in emphasis "from separate military Service concepts of operation" to "joint and combined operations," or "integrated and even interdependent operations." See U.S. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, Washington, D.C., February 6, 2006c, pp. vi, 41.

the USAF perspective has been relatively absent from joint planning for both combat missions and for development of indigenous security forces.[29] One hears that "air is often assumed" or that airpower is treated like a "helpdesk," meaning that commanders plan and conduct ground operations without the airman's perspective, then call in air support just before the start of an operation or while it is under way. Thus, there is a tendency not to use air capabilities most effectively for the objective at hand because air assets may not be positioned correctly—hence, the oft-heard complaint from Army colleagues that "the USAF is not supporting the fight." This is a misapplication of the relationship between supporting and supported commanders. Planning for the development of indigenous military capabilities has suffered from the same lack of coordination. It has resulted in belated involvement of the USAF in development activities that play to its strengths and competencies.[30]

This situation must improve, but it will not necessarily do so as a result of a spontaneous change in perspective at the theater level. Getting USAF operators to the planning table requires a sustained effort of persuasion from the USAF leadership and the assignment of experienced USAF planners to the theater to help ensure that airpower is employed effectively and that development of indigenous air arms rises in priority. Notably, airmen should be closely involved in decisionmaking on targeting from the air. In counterinsurgency, where influencing the perception of the indigenous population is critical to improving central government legitimacy and denying support to insurgents, ill-advised military strikes can prove tactically successful but strategically damaging. The USAF should ensure that the perspectives of regionally and culturally knowledgeable airmen are adequately represented in decisions about whether and how to strike targets.[31]

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[29] Author discussions with USAF personnel at USCENTAF, USAFSOC, and the Air Staff.

[30] It took a Class A mishap involving a crash of an Iraqi Comp Air aircraft in May 2006—along with the loss of life of three U.S. servicemen and an Iraqi pilot—to open the door to systematic USAF support for Iraq's air force.

[31] Author discussions with RAND colleague Steven Hosmer.

USAF Posture in the Theater

The USAF roles and tasks described above will require some access to bases in the area. However, as noted in previous chapters, the local populace and regional actors may see a highly visible U.S. military presence in Iraq or Afghanistan as threatening or undesirable. At every opportunity, U.S. spokesmen should emphasize that the Iraqi and Afghan governments will make decisions regarding the presence of U.S. forces in their countries and their access to bases—just as other friendly nations do in consultation with the United States. Government legitimacy can be bolstered and local sensitivities to U.S. presence assuaged if the United States declares its intention not to seek permanent bases in either country and emphasizes that U.S. presence and use of bases will be determined by mutual agreement. This will be a challenge. In the minds of most people in these regions, nothing involving U.S. military presence comes about through mutual agreement—they perceive either that the United States is imposing its will or that their governments are selling out. Significantly, a long-term U.S. presence seems to generate more apprehension in Iraq than in Afghanistan. Local support for U.S. presence in Afghanistan remains high, but this support could become more tenuous in the event of worsening security, political, and economic conditions.[32]

Generally, the in-country USAF posture must reflect a respect for Iraqi and Afghan sovereignty. Permanent basing in these two countries may not be an option, and the United States should be extremely sensitive to local perceptions of U.S. presence. It is imperative that the United States strikes a balance between operations from bases inside and outside of Iraq and Afghanistan. In addition to maintaining access to bases in Iraq and Afghanistan, the United States should explore other countries' openness to allowing continuous operations from their territory over the long term for the purposes of supporting the Iraqi and Afghan governments in counterinsurgency, counterterrorism, and reduction of ungoverned areas. USAF access to bases in nearby coun-

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[32] There are already signs of popular frustration with the pace of development in Afghanistan. See Pamela Constable and Javed Hamdard, "Accident Sparks Riot in Afghan Capital," *Washington Post*, May 30, 2006, p. A1.

tries for the purposes of stabilizing Iraq and Afghanistan would help relieve some of the need for a large and potentially unpopular U.S. military presence in those two countries, particularly Iraq. In addition, such access could provide the United States with basing flexibility in the event that political, security, or operational circumstances in Iraq or Afghanistan render use of sites there less attractive. USAF assets will have to be prepared to support U.S. reinforcements in case of a worsening security situation in either country.

However, given the demands likely to be levied on U.S. airpower for many years in both Iraq and Afghanistan, USAF assets will need long-term access to at least one or two major airbases in each country. Some capabilities the USAF will provide should be based close to the area of operations to enable responsiveness and persistence at a reasonable cost in terms of operations tempo (OPTEMPO) and resources. Predator orbits, XCAS, CSAR, and tactical airlift could be conducted much more effectively and efficiently from Balad or Al-Asad in Iraq and from Bagram or Kandahar in Afghanistan than from bases in Kuwait or Kyrgyzstan. Conversely, some tasks—such as long-range ISR, aerial refueling, striking HVTs, and tasks associated with deterrence—may just as easily be accomplished from bases outside the two nations. Moreover, as operations with Iraqi and Afghan forces become more commonplace, U.S. airmen will more frequently need to conduct planning, intelligence-sharing, and tasking of missions with their Iraqi and Afghan counterparts in Baghdad and Kabul—not from a distance. Of course, a sizable contingent of U.S. airmen will likely be involved in training, equipping, and advising the air arms of the two nations, and these airmen will also require basing support and security. As such, the United States will need to gain agreement from the governments in Kabul and Baghdad for extensive USAF use of bases until either indigenous air arms can take over the key tasks that U.S. airpower performs or political accommodation diminishes violence and insecurity there.

A Sustained Level of Effort

As discussed in this chapter, U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan execute a wide array of missions both independently and in concert with coalition and host-nation partners. Operational emphasis should shift in response to changes in the capabilities and character of indigenous security forces, progress in countering insurgent and terrorist groups, potential roles of other regional powers, and the outlook and effectiveness of the central Iraqi and Afghan governments. Much of this will depend on political developments in the two countries as their governments try to make progress in building national unity and effective governance. Ultimately, the U.S. objective in both Iraq and Afghanistan is to encourage a transition in the security relationship whereby U.S. forces are relegated to much smaller support, training, and other niche roles; and indigenous forces can operate independently or, when needed, work interoperably with U.S. forces.

Figure 4.1 provides a graphical representation of a potential transition in terms of USAF levels of effort in direct operations, TEAA, and cooperative activities with governments in Kabul and Baghdad.

The bottom two bands represent direct operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the third and fourth represent TEAA activities under the rubric of "building partner capacity." Until recently, the USAF was devoting its entire effort to direct attack on insurgent and terrorist targets and support for other U.S. and coalition operations; as indicated above, involvement in TEAA came much later. In the best case—where the central governments in Baghdad and Kabul gain more control over the level of violence, the insurgencies diminish, and effective governance spreads throughout each country—the USAF and other coalition forces can reduce their focus on direct operations and can maintain their emphasis on training, equipping, advising, and assisting indigenous forces. Finally, the top band represents cooperative activities between the United States and either Iraq or Afghanistan. As government forces become more capable, they can increasingly engage in more cooperative activities, on an equal footing, filling their own niche capabilities in combined operations with Western and other regional

Figure 4.1
A Notional Depiction of Relative USAF Levels of Future Effort in Iraq and Afghanistan
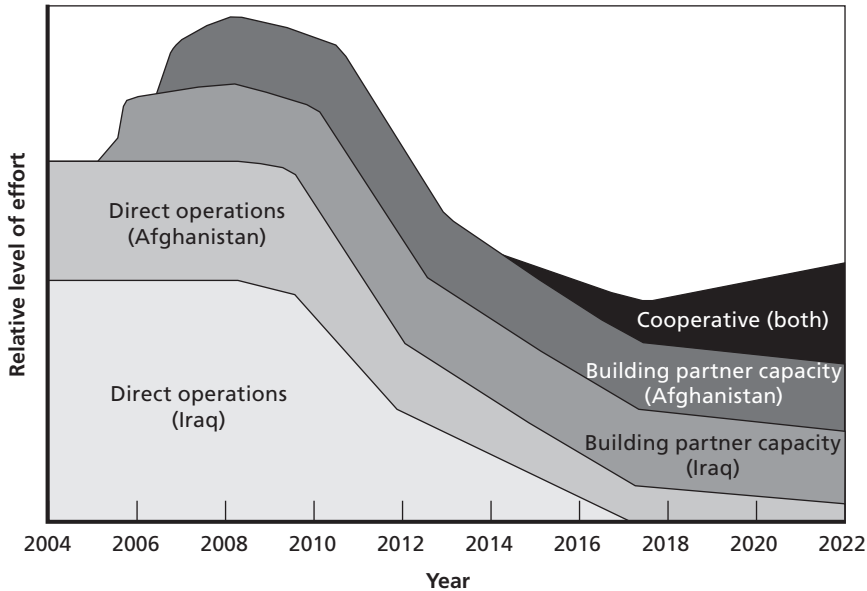
SOURCE: Adapted from RAND work on TEAA by David Ochmanek and Adam Grissom.
RAND MG681-4.1

forces. At this point, the relationship would become more of a partnership than one of dependence.

Implications of Alternative Iraqi and Afghan Outcomes

As noted throughout this monograph, a number of developments extrinsic to coalition efforts could have important consequences for the U.S. posture in Iraq and Afghanistan and could affect the continued development of the ISF and ANA along lines intended by coalition planners. In Iraq, central government assertiveness vis-à-vis the U.S. posture, a rise in ISF brutality, a more active Iranian role in the south, sectarian fighting and "ethnic cleansing," and an increase in Kurdish separatist impulses are but a few of the challenges coalition forces could

face in the future. In Afghanistan, U.S. planners could face increased insurgent and terrorist attacks; expanded cooperation among the Taliban, al-Qaeda, and drug traffickers; increased efforts by warlords to maintain or expand control of their territories; and greater assertiveness by Iran and possibly Pakistan. These and other developments—examples of a deterioration in compatibility and possibly security that would put Iraq or Afghanistan in one of the two leftmost quadrants of the domain in Figure 1.2—could occur relatively quickly. U.S. forces will need to remain flexible to adapt to the challenges that might arise.

Over time, of course, the goal of U.S. and coalition policymakers is to forge effective, cooperative, pluralistic governments in Iraq and Afghanistan. Much of this chapter has described roles and activities for U.S., Iraqi, and Afghan forces that focus on maintaining positive trajectories toward creation of viable U.S. security partners. Undoubtedly, however, the DoD and the USAF must be prepared for less-favorable outcomes that would require varied U.S. responses. Thus, planners must develop hedging strategies to prepare for outcomes that threaten U.S. interests.

In Iraq, withdrawal of at least some U.S. ground troops looms as a real possibility in the near term, even as violence and instability continue. As indicated previously, U.S. airpower will not be tethered to ground forces in the sense that air assets would be drawn down proportionate to ground forces. In fact, requirements levied on the U.S. Air Force may increase in the midst of withdrawal and its aftermath. U.S. commanders may task U.S. and allied air assets to provide force protection and mobility to withdrawing ground forces to ensure that these forces arrive safely to their points of embarkation. These efforts would be in addition to the ongoing CT, COIN, and other requirements levied on U.S. air assets. Moreover, remaining ground troops, advisors, and indigenous security forces may need additional assistance from air assets to provide their "eyes and ears," mobility, and fire support to compensate for the departing ground troops. At the same time, U.S. airpower would continue to serve as a primary deterrent to overt intervention by neighbors. In the near term, therefore, USAF planners must develop an understanding of the potential requirements under

varied withdrawal scenarios, and the USAF might need to meet those requirements with existing or increased capabilities in the theater.

Over the longer term, because the interests of a government with multivectoral perspectives—such as a heavily Islamist regime in Baghdad—may not align squarely with many U.S. interests, U.S. cooperation with Iraq's security forces could be somewhat circumscribed but would emphasize ways of enticing its government toward more favorable foreign and defense policy positions. On the whole, however, such an outcome would represent a loss of U.S. leverage in the relationship compared with more compatible outcomes.[33] Likewise, Russian, Chinese, and Iranian leverage could increase. Indigenous security forces could develop in fundamentally different ways from those currently envisioned. The USAF might remain involved in conducting focused training, equipping, and advising activities under a more-limited situational partnership with the Iraqi government, but its ability to influence the IqAF's character and the types of platforms and capabilities it seeks would be diminished.

Operationally, the United States would be less likely to conduct major counterinsurgency operations with Iraqi security forces under a heavily Islamist regime unless it agreed to policies more in line with U.S. interests. The demand for U.S. military capabilities to support both internal security and deterrence might be reduced. If asked, the United States would provide some support to the government in the event of a continuing insurgency, if for no other reason than to help minimize threats from undergoverned areas and reduce potential regional instability. Counterinsurgency support could include some ISR and transport (especially for humanitarian aid), but would probably eschew fire support to indigenous forces. However, the United States would still be interested in conducting either combined or U.S.-only operations against terrorist groups remaining in undergoverned areas. As for supporting the government against external threats, the

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[33] Even under the best of circumstances, the United States may also experience a loss of leverage in the immediate aftermath of a large-scale withdrawal from Iraq if the first truly postoccupation government seeks to show independence by downgrading its relationship with Washington. This is less likely in the case of Afghanistan.

United States could enter into tacit agreements with the Islamist government to counter overt aggression against its territory if one arises. These might include support against coercion by a nuclear-armed Iran, from which even a Shi'a-dominated, heavily Islamist Iraq might want to maintain independence. Access to bases in Iraq would likely be more limited as well, with much of any operational support based outside the country. All other things being equal (such as the internal security environment), operational demand on the USAF in this case might decrease in comparison with the more compatible case, particularly in terms of requirements for strike assets.

A renewed dictatorship in Iraq or a resurgent Taliban regime in Afghanistan would force a major change in U.S. military strategy in the regions. The complexion of indigenous security forces could be altered extensively to emphasize regime security against internal dissent and, potentially, aggressiveness toward other states. In Iraq's case, this might lead to large regular armies and intelligence services designed both for internal repression and future offensive operations against neighboring states. The U.S. role in training, equipping, and advising indigenous forces would be minor or nonexistent, depending on whether opportunities arise to ease the host government toward more cooperative policies.

In these outcomes, the incompatible regime in Kabul or Baghdad might become more an object of U.S. military planning than a partner in it. It might still be possible to work with government forces to counter terrorist groups operating within their borders and to counter narcotics trafficking in the case of Afghanistan, but the United States would want to retain the ability to strike terrorist and other targets with or without the blessing of the host government. The U.S. military would cooperate with regional allies and support intelligence collection against the uncooperative government, tasking the USAF with airborne ISR missions along the borders and potentially those requiring overflight; space-based capabilities would also be employed. USAF assets would be critical for deterring a regime in Baghdad or Kabul from taking aggressive action against neighbors friendly to the United States, and basing schemes in the regions would have to account for this circumstance. This role would be particularly important if an unco-

operative Iraq in the future attained possession of weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them. Under some circumstances, the United States may choose to support insurgencies against recalcitrant Iraqi or Afghan governments, requiring a U.S. military effort to train, equip, advise, and assist insurgent groups. Overall, enduring demand for U.S. military capability might be relatively low in this case, and episodic demand would rise in the event of potential conflict with the uncooperative state.

In a condition of impending or actual state failure, the United States may seek to employ military force to achieve several objectives, and the demand for U.S. military power and USAF capabilities could be quite high—potentially higher than in the existing environments in Iraq and Afghanistan. The United States might employ force to shore up failing governments, support certain local forces to help maintain security in their areas and a balance of power among provinces (Iraq), deter or prevent neighboring states from entering the conflict, coordinate with neighboring states to prevent spillover of instability, support international peacekeeping and peace-enforcement efforts, and provide humanitarian assistance to populations in distress. At the same time, U.S. military forces could be employed to track and strike terrorist organizations and other dangerous groups taking advantage of the security vacuum. To the extent that a central government remained, the U.S. military might continue training and equipping activities but probably at a low level of effort.

Complete state failure in Iraq or Afghanistan may require the USAF to engage in multifaceted operations that include many of the tasks its assets accomplish currently but with the addition of such missions as tracking refugee flows and providing food, shelter, and services, protecting safe areas and isolated populations, and separating warring factions. A greater border monitoring effort may be required both to track and contain movement of displaced populations within borders and to monitor actions by neighboring countries that might seek to intervene in support of domestic Iraqi or Afghan groups. At the same time, cooperation with surrounding states may increase to ensure a common approach that discourages broader regional conflict and supports the establishment of a more stable equilibrium in the failed state.

The USAF may help facilitate such an approach by working with counterparts in the air arms of neighboring countries to help them monitor their borders, provide humanitarian assistance to refugees who have crossed into their territories, and reduce unsanctioned material support to and reinforcement of warring Iraqi or Afghan groups. Finally, the USAF might be called upon to cooperate with and provide support to substate actors. In particular, access to Irbil in Iraqi Kurdistan could provide a secure, nearby operating base to help support air operations there and in other parts of Iraq. Such a presence could also aid in alleviating Turkish concerns if it dampens Kurdish aspirations for independence and helps monitor agreements over the status of Kirkuk. As mentioned previously, however, the level of USAF and DoD involvement in a failed-state scenario would depend upon the political will in Washington to intervene. Still, U.S. military planners must prepare to meet the requirements of intervention should the decision be taken.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has emphasized that both the Iraqi and Afghan militaries face challenges that will preclude their ability to independently ensure their national security for years. Therefore, as long as Kabul and Baghdad retain outlooks compatible with that of the United States and welcome U.S. efforts to secure their nations and promote stability in their respective regions—and as long as U.S. interests dictate—heavy U.S. military involvement will be required to support their national security, whether to bolster the development of government forces or to mitigate the effects of fragmentation. In light of substantial pressure from within the United States for major withdrawals of U.S. ground troops, the USAF may bear the brunt of this requirement as combat troop levels diminish. But the faster the United States and its partners can develop effective indigenous airpower, the sooner the operational demands on the USAF can diminish. Thus, the USAF should promote the idea that greater priority in effort and resources be applied to building and sustaining relatively capable Iraqi and Afghan air arms to ensure that they, too, can in the future operate independently to sup-

port their nations' security and sovereignty. However, the USAF also must be prepared for rapid changes in the requirement in the event of breakdowns in internal security and/or changes in government outlook. This requires planners to develop strategies that hedge against such outcomes and position the USAF to support U.S. interests under less-favorable circumstances.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This final chapter summarizes conclusions and recommendations emerging from the preceding analysis of U.S., Iraqi, and Afghan interests; the threats to those interests; alternative bilateral and multilateral security relationships and the security cooperation activities to support them; and potential roles of U.S., Afghan, and Iraqi military forces in general and airpower in particular. The first section offers conclusions and recommendations to the U.S. government and the U.S. Department of Defense on forging future bilateral security relationships and cooperation with Baghdad and Kabul in the context of a vision for stable regional security structures. The second section suggests roles for the U.S. Air Force in supporting these relationships and provides recommendations to prepare it for future demands in and around Afghanistan and Iraq.

Whether or not Afghanistan and Iraq eventually become stable and cooperative partners, U.S. policymakers now need to think through the longer-term prospects for establishing enduring security relationships with them. Both Baghdad and Kabul are naturally consumed with countering near-term threats to internal security from insurgencies, terrorist groups, and criminal enterprises. The United States continues intensive efforts to help these nations stabilize and strengthen their governance capacity in the near term. There is uncertainty as to the internal political and security outcomes of these efforts—outcomes that will have a direct bearing on the nature of U.S. security arrangements with these nations. Moreover, the United States must build its security relationships with Iraq and Afghanistan in the context of

opportunities and challenges arising in the regions around them. The terror attacks of September 11, 2001, and the subsequent U.S. involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan have created a new regional security environment whose outlines remain fluid and whose likely evolution is by no means apparent. Alternative regional security structures may emerge, and understanding the nature of such structures will help frame long-term U.S.-Iraqi and U.S.-Afghan security relationships.

Lasting security and stability in Iraq and Afghanistan are critical to U.S. interests. Advancing these interests calls for a multilayered approach to regional security, including appropriate U.S. bilateral relations with Iraq and Afghanistan and multilateral relations between and among the surrounding regions that emphasize meeting common challenges. It also requires a focus on long-term strategic goals, planning for potential political and security outcomes, and engagement with security partners to leverage outcomes that would be favorable to U.S. interests. Placing future security relationships in more-concrete terms can help communicate U.S. commitment and intentions to Iraqi, Afghan, and regional governments and peoples; build U.S. leverage, influence, and access; guide current and future security cooperation efforts; and plan future U.S. military activities in the Middle East and Central and South Asia.

Recommendations for the USG and the DoD

The United States must clarify its long-term intentions to the governments and peoples in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the surrounding regions. In the presence of uncertainty about the political and security outcomes in Iraq and Afghanistan, calls from numerous U.S. quarters for an "exit strategy," and periodic reports of withdrawal plans, regional officials, analysts, and observers are expressing confusion about the U.S. vision for security and stability in the area. The United States should communicate its vision by defining the types of multilateral relationships it favors in the region and the bilateral relationships it desires with Iraq and Afghanistan.

Regional Partnerships and Security Structures

The United States should cultivate a layered regional security framework that emphasizes bilateral and multilateral cooperation on common challenges. Over time, this framework should provide an attractive and more stable alternative to the competitively oriented structures that traditionally have dominated the regions' security environments. The framework would focus on such "soft" issues as humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, counternarcotics, border security, and air and maritime safety, which are compatible with the interests of most if not all of the states in the regions. Regional and extra-regional actors already are considering similar proposals that build upon nascent regional activities in these soft areas. Under this rubric, the United States should certainly continue to pursue regional dialogue about the futures of Iraq and Afghanistan, including how regional states can encourage positive outcomes in these two nations and how the states might cooperate to mitigate the consequences of less-favorable outcomes—especially spillover from state failure, civil war, and warlordism.

It is important to note that in the near to medium term, competitive relationships will continue to exist simply because individual states in the regions perceive threats to their vital national security interests from other states and nonstate actors. The weaker states, in particular, will desire security guarantees from more-powerful regional and extra-regional nations to protect them from coercion and aggression by nearby states. The idea of a layered security framework is to initiate, expand, and sustain a culture of regional cooperation, mutual understanding, confidence, transparency, and interconnectedness that will eventually supplant military competition as the dominant framework. In this context—for good or ill—Iran is a major player in the regions where Iraq and Afghanistan are situated, and their bilateral relationships with Tehran will tend to be important shapers of events in both countries. U.S. actions that are seen as aimed at "containing" or "freezing out" Iran are likely both to fail and to boomerang against U.S. interests in Iraq and Afghanistan. While the United States may not seek to engage Iran cooperatively in the near term on issues that transcend Iraq, the door must be left open to eventual Iranian participation in any cooperatively based regional security framework.

Inasmuch as regional states view the development of a cooperative regional security framework as conducive to their interests, they should be encouraged to drive the conceptualization and implementation of the framework. Extra-regional actors will need to be cautious about the appearance of imposing external (e.g., Western) security structures on the region, as the emergence of such a perception is likely to reduce regional acceptance and participation.

U.S. Partnerships with Iraq and Afghanistan

The analysis in this monograph suggests that the USG and DoD should take the following approach to developing long-term bilateral relationships with Iraq and Afghanistan:

- *Seek a more detailed, resourced strategic partnership with Kabul.* This relationship should be defined with the Afghans based on mutual interests and needs and should reassure them that the United States has a long-term commitment to underwriting their country's security and self-determination. It should clarify the responsibilities of each party and identify the resources required to sustain them over time. Importantly, the parties should emphasize that the strategic partnership (and continued U.S. military presence supporting the partnership) is dedicated to securing Afghanistan, integrating it into its region as a stabilizing force, and helping address areas of disagreement as well as common concern between Kabul and its neighbors—not at attacking neighboring countries or promoting development of offensive military capabilities. Clarifying the United States' commitment to Afghanistan would go a long way toward alleviating Afghan fears and establishing greater confidence in U.S. intentions.
- *Prepare to offer Baghdad a strong situational partnership.* Even if Baghdad is inclined to cooperate with the United States in the long term, local sensitivities may lead to a less visible and robust relationship, such as a situational partnership. Reassuring Iraqis that the United States does not intend to maintain a major military presence in Iraq over the long term and generally clarifying U.S. intentions could mitigate such sensitivities. In addition,

U.S. use of Iraqi military facilities should be based on mutual agreement and a common understanding of the security situation in Iraq.

- *Offer a wide range of security cooperation activities to cooperative governments in Kabul and Baghdad.* U.S. planners should link initiation and continuation of specific security cooperation activities and programs to be offered to Iraq and Afghanistan to institutional progress, government behavior, and the security situation. This approach can serve to provide incentives to the governments and militaries of the two nations to cooperate with the United States and develop along positive trajectories. It can also provide planners with sequenced "waypoints" that help them determine when activities should be expanded—or scaled back in the event Iraq or Afghanistan slide into less-favorable trajectories that lead to outcomes that are less compatible with U.S. interests.

Recommendations for the U.S. Air Force

The United States continues to employ its military forces in direct operations and in TEAA activities to help bring about stable security environments and cooperative, moderate governments in Iraq and Afghanistan. The USAF is a critical part of these efforts. It helps build Iraqi and Afghan airpower and enables friendly forces to gain vital surveillance information, maneuver quickly and safely, exploit rapid, effective, and accurate fire support, neutralize high-value targets at times and places of commanders' choosing, and communicate and navigate. *The USAF should expect these and other capabilities to be in high demand in and around Afghanistan and Iraq for many years, even after substantial withdrawals of U.S. ground troops.* USAF presence and OPTEMPO will probably not be tethered to levels of U.S. ground forces in country. Indigenous security forces will lack key capabilities that airpower brings to the fight for some time, and thus the USAF will likely be called upon to provide them until the Afghan and Iraqi air arms are more fully developed.

Building Iraqi and Afghan Capacity for Independent Air Operations

The capabilities of Iraqi and Afghan forces directly affect the demands that U.S. forces will face in the future. Just as U.S. ground forces will withdraw as indigenous ground forces gain the capacity to operate independently and effectively, so too will the U.S. Air Force be able to reduce its commitments as the IqAF and AAC stand up. Although demands on the USAF would depend heavily on how the political situations develop in each country, *the greater the emphasis on building indigenous air capabilities now, the faster operational demands on the USAF will diminish.* The DoD and the USAF should seek to apply a wide range of security cooperation tools to help the air arms develop institutionally and operationally—namely, education, training, equipping, exchanges, conferences, assessments, physical security support, infrastructure assistance, and, later, exercises and defense or military contacts. The USAF can leverage numerous programs, including IMET, FMF, CTFP, and the Air National Guard State Partnership Program.

Specifically, the USAF should take the following steps to building Iraqi and Afghan air capacity:

- *Advocate for increased, sustained resources for higher-priority development of the Iraqi Air Force and Afghan Air Corps.* Increasing the emphasis on airpower development will require higher levels of resources. The decision to give high priority to development of Iraqi and Afghan airpower does not rest with the USAF, nor does the USAF control the bulk of the resources that could be applied. USAF leaders participating in DoD and interagency processes should seek opportunities in discussions within the USG to make the case for an infusion of additional resources and effort into these endeavors.
- *In the near to medium term, focus on building Iraqi and Afghan air capabilities that enhance government legitimacy and support indigenous ground forces.* Internal security continues to be a primary focus of all Iraqi and Afghan security services, and the air arms are no exception. Existing statements of Iraqi and Afghan security strategy describe future militaries that independently protect each nation while serving as a stabilizing force for moderation in

the respective regions. Over time, a viable IqAF and AAC can be built to support such priorities and to serve as models of service to a unified Iraq and Afghanistan. The USAF can and will help in building their operational capabilities and strengthening their institutions. Initially, planners should emphasize intra-theater rotary- and fixed-wing transport and a reconnaissance capability—as they now seem to be doing in Iraq—to support counterinsurgency efforts (including infrastructure and border security) and central government presence in outlying areas.

- *Exercise caution in introducing Iraqi air attack capabilities.* These capabilities might be developed to support Iraqi ground units in counterinsurgency operations, and later to support the army in defense of Iraqi territory. The USAF must strike a balance between, on the one hand, the need to involve the IqAF in providing fire support to Iraqi forces, to maintain U.S. leverage and to retain visibility into Iraqi force planning, and, on the other hand, the desire to avoid association with sectarian strife and to discourage Iraqi acquisition of capabilities its neighbors might perceive as "offensive." The USAF therefore should encourage U.S.-Iraqi interoperability, a common targeting process, professionalism, and transparency in force planning and training.

- *In Afghanistan, help the AAC develop programs for education and basic airmanship.* At the same time, build reliable capabilities for airlifting government officials, ANA troops, and humanitarian aid, performing CASEVAC, and conducting rudimentary surveillance. These capabilities should be emphasized more in the near term because they are critical to establishing government credibility (especially in remote areas) and are less demanding in terms of training and equipping than other tasks like close air support. They would also seem to encourage best use of existing air assets in Afghanistan.

- *Ensure adequate plans for the long-term sustainment of IqAF and AAC capabilities.* This task is equally as important as developing the capabilities themselves. The USAF can help Iraq and Afghanistan appropriately equip their new air arms and advise their planners against assembling a "hodge-podge" force that will be diffi-

cult to sustain over time. Moreover, the USAF can support the air arms in developing organizations, leaders, aircrew, maintainers, base support capabilities, and a sustainable training pipeline. U.S. advisors can aid indigenous operators in developing concepts for conducting missions in the Iraqi and Afghan milieus and in operating with their other security forces.

- *Encourage the IqAF and AAC to participate in regional and multinational security forums and to forge contacts with their counterparts in regional states.* In building Afghan, and especially Iraqi, capability to conduct air operations, the USAF must be cognizant of the perceptions of neighboring states and the need to support regional stability. Greater Iraqi and Afghan participation in regional forums will help facilitate transparency in national defense programs, promote a culture of cooperation toward establishment of regional security structures, and expand opportunities for contacts with other regional military forces.

- *Develop security cooperation plans that hedge against tendencies toward less-favorable political and security outcomes in Iraq and Afghanistan.* The USAF is now conducting security cooperation activities that are largely applicable to cooperative states; however, because the political and security outcomes in Iraq and Afghanistan are uncertain, the USAF must ensure that it can adapt its TEAA activities in the event of less-favorable trajectories. This means identifying security cooperation activities or indigenous capabilities that might be limited in the event of changes in circumstances on the ground.

Direct Operations in Iraq and Afghanistan

USAF force elements will continue to conduct direct operations in Iraq and Afghanistan into the foreseeable future. These assets will likely be asked to accomplish numerous operational tasks involving ISR, airlift, CAS, strikes on HVTs, base support and force protection, and deterrence of external coercion and aggression. However, U.S. ground forces may begin withdrawing well before Iraqi and Afghan air arms are able to operate effectively and independently, leaving the USAF as the main

provider of support to indigenous ground forces. To prepare for this role, we recommend that the U.S. Air Force take the following steps:

- *Assess the levels of U.S. ground forces needed to support U.S. air operations.* Requirements associated with coordinating operations with Iraqi and Afghan security forces and providing force protection to remaining U.S. assets may be high even after major drawdowns of U.S. ground combat forces. The USAF must work with the U.S. land components to ensure that it can continue to support U.S. interests in Iraq and Afghanistan even after major troop withdrawals.

- *Eschew permanent basing in Iraq and Afghanistan in long-range plans but seek mutual agreement on access to in-country facilities.* Generally, the U.S. posture in Iraq and Afghanistan must reflect sensitivity and respect for local sovereignty. Yet the USAF will likely need access to one or two airbases in the near and medium term in each country to enable responsive and persistent COIN operations at a reasonable cost in terms of OPTEMPO and resources. Moreover, as operations with Iraqi and Afghan forces become more commonplace, U.S. airmen will more frequently need to conduct planning, intelligence sharing, and tasking of missions with their Iraqi and Afghan air force and army counterparts in Baghdad and Kabul, not from a distance. The access issue should be negotiated with the governments in Kabul and Baghdad as co-equals in the context of drawdowns of U.S. troops.

- *Develop contingency plans to prepare for the possibility of alternative outcomes in Iraq or Afghanistan.* The United States and its coalition partners are working hard to propel Iraq and Afghanistan toward security and stability. At the time of this writing, the most worrisome alternative is a failed- or failing-state outcome involving sectarian violence (in Iraq) or warlordism (in Afghanistan). Such an outcome could require a high level of commitment from USAF assets. Airpower may be tasked extensively in such a scenario for peacekeeping or peace enforcement, providing humanitarian aid, protecting safe areas, and deterring outside intervention. In addition, the reemergence of authoritarian or dictatorial governments

in either country could place varied demands on USAF assets across the regions.

- *Strongly advocate for a USAF seat at the theater planning table for operations and security cooperation, and assign the most experienced USAF planners to the theater.* Accomplishing tasks associated with direct operations and the development of indigenous forces requires a systematic approach to planning that involves all components of the theater command. To date, it is apparent from discussions with airmen that the USAF perspective has been relatively absent from joint planning. Improving this situation will require strong advocacy by the USAF leadership. Bringing the USAF to the planning table will help ensure that airpower is employed effectively and that development of indigenous air arms receives a high priority.

Planning for a Long-Term Role

Given the wide range of important roles described in this monograph, the USAF will need to ensure that it is adequately prepared for a continued high OPTEMPO in and around Iraq and Afghanistan. *The USAF should address the implications of ongoing high levels of demand now.* This includes preparing a rotation base to minimize problems associated with high personnel tempo and the emergence of low-density/high-demand (LD/HD) assets. It may involve shoring up manning levels in certain high-demand fields and expanding programs to increase the area and language skills of U.S. airmen in those career fields that involve training, advising, and operating with Iraqis and Afghans. (These programs would be useful as well over the long term for security cooperation activities in other areas of the Middle East and Central and South Asia.) The USAF should also begin exploring options to secure USAF modernization in the presence of enduring operations and increasingly constrained budgets. As U.S. ground forces withdraw, there is a potential for a sort of fatigue to set in after billions of dollars have been spent on OIF and OEF. The USAF could be caught in the middle of this while having to meet other emerging demands in these regions and elsewhere. Without adequate resources, USAF decisionmakers could find themselves mortgaging future capabilities to pay for expen-

sive ongoing operations. However, preparing for and even embracing theAir Force's essential role in Iraq and Afghanistan will go far toward setting the appropriate context in which the USAF plans and programs its forces in the years to come.

Force Structure Data, Iraqi and Afghan Air Arms, May 2007

Table A.1
Force Structures of Iraqi and Afghan Air Arms, May 2007

	Number	Mission	Comments
Iraqi Air Force			
C-130E	3	Air transport	
SAMA CH2000	8	ISR	
CompAir 7SL	(5)	ISR	Permanently grounded due to safety issues
Seeker	2	ISR	
Cessna Caravan	1	ISR	
UH-1H	16	Battlefield mobility	
Bell Jet Ranger	5	Flying training	
Mi-17	10	Battlefield mobility	
Total IqAF	45 (+5)		Eight aircraft types
Afghan Air Corps			
AN-24	1	Air transport	
AN-26	1	Air transport	
AN-32	3	Air transport	
Mi-8/Mi-17	8	Battlefield mobility	
Mi-35	6	Battlefield mobility	
LC-39	2	Flying training	
Total AAC	21		Seven aircraft types

SOURCES: Jane's Military and Security Assessments, "AIR FORCE, Iraq," July 12, 2007, and "AIR FORCE, Afghanistan," June 28, 2007; Military Periscope.com, "Iraq: Air Force," updated May 1, 2007, and "Afghanistan: Overview," updated May 1, 2007; U.S. Department of Defense, 2007, p. 42; and author discussions with officials at USCENTAF.

NOTE: Numbers in parentheses refer to permanently grounded aircraft.

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